

ALICE RIORDAN



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ALICE RIORDAN,

THE BLIND MAN'S DAUGHTER.

A TALE FOR THE YOUNG.

BY

MRS. J. SADLIER.

Warriors and statesmen have their meed of praise,
And what they do or suffer men record;
But the long sacrifice of woman's days
Passes without a thought — without a word.

MRS. NORTON.

. . . Strongest minds
Are often those of whom the noisy world
Hears least.

WORDSWORTH.

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PREFACE.

THERE is little need of a preface to a work like this, which bears its moral on every page, and is, moreover, so very simple and unpretending that it requires not the formality of an introduction. Still I have a few words of explanation to give with regard to the former edition. *Alice Riordan's* "first appearance on any stage" was in the columns of the BOSTON PILOT, and, when issued in book form, it was printed from the newspaper type. The consequence was that many typographical errors escaped the eye of the proof-reader. I have added another chapter to the original work, as a sort of magic glass whereby those who were so anxious to know "what became

of Alice" can have a peep into the privacy of her after-life.

Hoping that I may never again have to answer the question aforesaid (so often put heretofore), I once more send *The Blind Man's Daughter* to win her own way, and, I hope, to edify others.

MONTREAL, March 28, 1854.



ALICE RIORDAN.

CHAPTER I.

Young, very young she is, but wholly vanished,
Youth's morning colors from her cheek are gone,
All gayer and all careless thoughts are banished
By the perpetual presence of but one.

And yet that sweet face is not all of sorrow,
It wears a softer, and a higher mood;
And seemeth from the world within to borrow
A holy and a constant fortitude. — MISS LONDON.

TWELVE years ago, when the brief, bright spring of Lower Canada was fast merging into summer — fervid summer — a steamboat from Quebec arrived at Montreal, heavily laden with — what? — with flannels and broadcloths, and stuffs from the looms of Yorkshire and Lancashire — or with muslins and cottons, shawls and kerchiefs from Greenock or Paisley — or with spices, or coffee, or tea, from the far-off climes of Asia? Reader, no! her freight was a crowd of human beings, some with the swart, coarse features, and strong, burly frames which usually belong to the Dutch and Germans; others with that unmistakable cast of countenance which distinguishes the children of the “Land o’ Cakes,” but by far the greater number were the sons and

daughters of that Western Isle which has enriched the countries of the New World with a hardy, toiling race—the bone and sinew of society. Irish they were—the greater part of that crowd of emigrants. Irish, by their cheerful and somewhat shrewd look; by the rosy hue of health on their weather-bronzed features, and by the peculiarity of their costume; the men with their gray or blue frieze coats, short-knee breeches, round Caroline hats and gay-colored cravats, and the women with their modest-looking caps and hooded cloaks, and the girls with plain straw bonnets of the coarsest kind, with an undue profusion of ribbon, and woollen plaid shawls, though the season was summer. Yes, they were, indeed, Irish—chiefly from the northern and northwestern counties; but they were far removed from that squalid wretchedness which, of late years, too often marks the appearance of the Irish emigrant.

Nearly all had landed on the wharf, and already were the boat's crew preparing to take away the gangway, when they perceived that a few of the emigrants were still on the deck, and they roughly called out to them to be off quickly—what were they loitering there for?

“Sure we were jist helpin’ this poor, dark man an’ the little girl to get their things ashore. Will you let the boords stan’ for one minnit till we get them over, with this box of theirs?”

The speaker was a sturdy, farmer-like man, who, with his son, a lad of sixteen or seventeen, had remained behind to assist those who were, indeed, totally dependent on others. The father and son carried between them a good-sized box, or sea-chest, clasped with iron at the corners, and fastened with a hasp and padlock, while after

them came its owner, feeling the way before him with a thick, blackthorn staff, and holding by the hand a little girl of some twelve or thirteen years. Alas! poor Cormac Riordan, but little protection was his arm for that delicate-looking child, though he was still in the prime of life, and of hale, hearty appearance, and it was pitiful to mark the confiding air with which he followed the impulse of her touch, for he was blind—stone blind. And his daughter led him on, lovingly and tenderly as one would a little child, watching his steps with anxious care, and drawing him dexterously away from the slightest appearance of danger. Both were comfortably, even neatly clad, and there was that about father and daughter which spoke of better days. Cormac was attired in a brown body-coat of good cloth, with knee-breeches of drab cassimere, a double-breasted vest of light color, and a black silk cravat. His tight-fitting hose were of gray wool, finely spun, and his shoes were much finer in their quality and of better workmanship than the common shoes or *brogues* of the Irish peasantry. Little Alice was equally well clad, and many a lady might have envied the simple grace of her girlish figure, in her plain calico dress of a pretty lilac color, with a large tippet of the same material falling around her shoulders, and a neat straw bonnet, simply tied down with a broad blue ribbon. Her light, fair hair was carefully drawn back under her bonnet, leaving the whole of her face exposed, and a sweet, mild-looking face it was, though somewhat grave for one so young. Alice Riordan seldom smiled, and when she did, the smile was anything but cheerful; it was the bright and beautiful sunbeam falling for an instant on the cold, white snow, and vanishing as quickly as it came. The habitual

expression of her face was sadness, particularly when her eyes rested, as they very often did, on the sightless countenance of her father.

The planks were replaced, the box deposited on the wharf, and Cormac, grasping the hand of Barney Dolan, warmly thanked him for his timely help. "The more so," said he, "as I was a stranger to you ——"

"Sthranger!" interrupted Barney, "ah, then, what do you say that for, man alive? Didn't we come from home together—at any rate we left Ireland together, an' that ought to make us the best of friends. Never say it again,—God bless you and don't—sure when people from the same counthry meets, an' them far away from home, among the raal sthrangers, they ought to do all they could for one another—that's my notion."

"Well, God bless you, honest man! God bless you!" said Cormac, still more warmly, "an' when that's your way of thinking, perhaps you wouldn't think it too much trouble to help us to make some inquiries about friends that we have here?"

"Why, then, indeed, it'll be the greatest 'o pleasure to me," returned Barney, "an' bedad I'm mighty glad to hear that you *have* friends to go to—poor, lone creatures as ye are."

"Alice," said the blind man, taking out a leather pocket-book and handing it to his daughter, "just look for your uncle's address—you know you put the slip o' paper that it was wrote on into one o' the pockets there."

While the little girl was looking through the leaves, for the scrap of paper, a carter drew near, perceiving that our little party had a respectable appearance and his question of "Do you want a cart, sir?" was answered by a ready "Yes—yes," from Cormac.

"Where do you want to go?" inquired the carter, "That will tell you," said Alice, handing him the paper, which she had just found.

"Mr. Henry Malone, St. Lawrence street," read the man slowly, and then he gave a long, significant whistle. "An' what is Mr. Malone to you?"

"He's my uncle," replied Alice, "an' it was he that sent for us. Do you know my uncle?"

"Ah, that I do," was the reply, "an' I can tell you, my good little girl, that you have a good home to go to; there's not many men in the city, out from the grand quality, that's better off than he is; an' what's more, he has the heart to divide his substance with them that wants it."

"I am glad to hear that my brother-in-law bears so good a character," said Cormac, "for it's many a year since I saw him, an' time often changes people for the worse. Since you know his place, my good man, you can take us there at once, I suppose!"

"Troth an' I will, then,—yourself an' this purty little girl of yours will be snug an' comfortable in Misther Malone's parlor before five minutes. I say, honest man!" he called out to Barney, who was helping his son to arrange their own goods and chattels on another cart, "I say, will you jist give me a lift here?"

"Bedad I will so," said Barney, coming up at a swinging pace, "I was hurryin' with our own things there to get helpin' this dacent man with his. Here's for it, now;" and with one vigorous effort the two succeeded in placing the box on the cart.

"Now, you'll walk beside the cart, Misther Malone," said the carter, as he turned his horse towards his destination. "You an' the little girl."

"My name is not Malone," said Cormac, quietly, "*my* name is Riordan. Henry Malone is not *my* brother, but my wife's—heaven be her bed? But can't we sit up on the cart beside the box?" he added.

The carter laughed, but Barney broke in, before he could answer, "Och, the sorra *that* you could, Mr. Riordan—if it's that they call you. Sure it isn't like a cart at all—it's like a step-lather, more than anything else, with big, long pegs to keep the boxes from comin' off. Musha, but it's the quare place all out, when that's the sort o' carts they have."

"You can take a cab, sir," said the carter, laughing all the time at Barney's simple wonder—"you'll only have to pay a British shilling, an' you'll be left at the very door."

So the cab was called, and after taking a kind leave of Barney and his son, with a few others of their fellow-passengers, Cormac and his daughter got in and were conveyed to the house of their relative, where their box arrived almost as soon as themselves.

"I declare, father, they've a hall door, with a bright brass knocker," said Alice. The cabman got down and knocked at the door.

"Do you tell me so, Alice?"

"Indeed, yes—an' there's as many windows on the house as there was on the *big house*,* at home."

Before Cormac could reply, the door was opened, and a small, thin woman made her appearance, who, on seeing the cab, instinctively put up her hand to arrange her headdress, then advanced a step to see who her visitors were.

* Manor house.

First stepped out Alice, who quickly turned to assist her father, and no sooner did the lady catch a glimpse of him, than she ran to the door of a tavern close by and called out, "Harry! Harry!—come here quickly—here's your niece and her father, both together!—why don't you come at once?"

"Take it easy, Lizzie, dear!" replied a loud, cheerful voice, and forthwith a round, red face popped out from the door of the tavern, and after it came a low, square-built figure, with a remarkably good paunch to match the rubicund visage aforesaid. "Take it easy," he repeated, "where's Cormac and the girl?"

"Here we are, Henry," said the blind man, advancing by his daughter's guidance, and holding out his hand in the direction of the voice, "I know you weren't looking for *me*, but when the time came for Alice to leave home, I couldn't bring myself to let her go alone, so you see you've one more than you expected."

"Well, you're heartily welcome, Cormac," replied his brother-in-law, with a cordial shake of the hand—"though I think you were a fool to leave your good, warm quarters in Dinny's snug corner—I wish you may be half as well off here."

"O! as to that, I'm willin' to take my chance—I thought it was a good opportunity for my little girl to get comin' out here, an', thinks I to myself, Harry Malone is greatly changed if he'd grudge Cormac Riordan a shelter for a little while—besides I have a few pounds with me that Dinny put in my pocket-book when we were partin'."

By this time Alice had received a kind and friendly welcome from her uncle, and perhaps these last words of her father had no small share

in the exuberant joy of her aunt's greeting. "Indeed, indeed," said she, "I'm overjoyed to see you both. Why, bless my heart, Harry! you didn't tell me that your niece was so very pretty and genteel—dear me, she looks quite the lady."

"How did I know what she was?" retorted her worthy spouse—"I never laid eyes on her since she was two years old, and how could I tell what way she turned out. But let us go in an' have something to drink."

The box was taken in—the cabman and carter paid off, and, these preliminaries settled, Mrs. Malone drew Alice into the narrow hall, which separated the shop from "the snug parlor" spoken of by the carter. Leaving the two men together, she took her up stairs, and introduced her to a very comfortable little bed-room, which she told her was intended for herself.

"Why, aunt, how can I ever thank you an' uncle enough for all your kindness—sending for me all the way to Ireland, an' having everything prepared for me before I came at all?"

"O, that's nothing, child," returned Mrs. Malone, carelessly—"you know we have no children of our own, and we intend to bring you up as our daughter—upon my word, I'm well pleased to see you such as you are—why, not one in the world would take you for a *greenhorn*!"

"For a *greenhorn*, aunt!" repeated Alice in surprise—"what is that?" Mrs. Malone laughed, "O! I forgot that you didn't know—any one that's just come out from home, we call them *greenhorns*, because—because—O, I declare I don't know why they're called so, but you'll soon get used to the word. There, now—put your bonnet and cap on the bed, and come down stairs,

till we see what the men are about. I'm sure you're not out of the need of some dinner!"

Harry had just mixed a second tumbler of punch for himself, and was insisting on his brother-in-law to take another. "Why, by the hole of my coat, Cormac Riordan! that'll never do — tut, man! take another tumbler, sure it's many a long year since we took a drop together before, and you wouldn't be the man to throw a damp on a meetin' like this. Here, I'll mix you a tumbler that'll warm the very heart in you — by the laws, I will — why, Cormac, you don't know how glad I am to see you."

"Thank you, Harry, thank you kindly;" said Cormac, laying his hand on his brother-in-law's arm. "I *know* you're glad to see me, an' only I thought you *would* you'd never have seen me here. But you must excuse me from takin' any more punch, for I make it a rule never to exceed one tumbler at a sittin'." I'm just as much obliged to you as if I took it."

Harry was still insisting, and Cormac begging himself off, when the door opened and in walked Mrs. Malone, and after her came Alice. This put "mine host" on a new scent. Jumping from his seat, with an alacrity little to be expected from his clumsy figure, he laid hold of his niece with one hand, and in the other he seized the glass of punch which Cormac had so steadily refused. "Here, now, Alice — drink your aunt's health, an' mine — that's the girl!"

Alice looked inquiringly at her father, as though he could have met or answered the look — then she took the glass from her uncle's hand with intuitive politeness, but set it down on the table without tasting its contents. "I never take any spirits or punch, uncle," she said, timidly. "My father says it isn't good for the like o' me."

"Why, nonsense, girl," said her uncle, testily, still offering the glass, and pressing it upon the shrinking girl — "don't be makin' a fool of yourself."

"Here, give it to me, Harry!" cried his wife, tipping him a knowing wink, "you make the poor child ashamed with your rough ways. I'll engage she'll take it from me."

"I'll be very thankful to you both," said Cormac, "if you'll not ask her to drink to it. The child says the truth when she tells you she never takes liquor, for I don't think it a seemly thing for a female — it's very hard to get over you — an' I am sure both Alice and myself ought to be grateful to you both, but there's no use asking the child to drink — it'll do her no good, an' once the like of her begins tastin' there's no sayin' how soon the devil might make her begin to like it. Better keep away from danger altogether."

"Ah, then, to the devil I pitch such squeamishness," cried Harry indignantly as he threw himself once more on his seat. Mrs. Malone had no better success, though, while Cormac was speaking, she kept winking knowingly at Alice, and making various gestures of contempt and impatience, pressing her all the time to take the punch, which Alice quietly put from her, whereupon Mrs. Malone waxed angry, and sat down the tumbler with a force that well nigh broke it to atoms. Alice blushed deeply. "Why, aunt," she said, in a low voice, "sure you wouldn't ask me to take it when my father forbids me — I know it's all through kindness you do it, an' I hope you're not vexed at me?"

"Vexed, indeed!" returned the angry little woman, with a disdainful toss of her head. "I can tell you it'll be many a long day before I'll

ask you again — it's enough to sicken any one to see such airs." And away she flounced, muttering something about seeing after the dinner. Soon after, Harry was summoned to the shop, and the father and daughter were left alone together. Cormac was not aware of the fact till his daughter crept close to his side, and put her arm round his neck. "They're gone, father," she softly whispered, and somehow it seemed as though the announcement gave pleasure to both the speaker and listener.

The blind man drew his daughter to him, and laid his hand caressingly on her head. "That's my own good Alice — I heard very well what you said to your aunt when she wanted to coax you to take the punch. You were right, my child, to act as you did, for if you took it that time at her biddin' unknownst to me, you'd be disobeyin' me, and deceivin' me, too, though you couldn't deceive God. Always remember that, Alice — no matter who sees you or who doesn't, God is always lookin' at you — if you keep that in mind you'll never transgress his holy law."

"But, father, wasn't it a curious thing for my aunt to ask me to do underhand what she just heard you sayin' that I wasn't to do on any account. Sure she knew very well that I'd be doin' what was wrong."

"As to that, my child," returned her father, evasively — "your uncle and aunt are both very glad to see us, an' they think, as many others do, that it's a dry meetin' when people don't take less or more liquor. But what sort of a place is it at all — I mean the house and furniture?"

"Oh, indeed, father," replied Alice, "I couldn't tell you the half o' the beautiful things that's in this one room. There's a grand mahogany table

—a round one—in the middle o' the floor, an' there's beautiful chairs an' a lookin' glass over the fireplace that you could see yourself in from head to foot—an' then the whole floor is covered with some kind of stuff or cloth all flowered over. An' my goodness, father, if you'd only see all the beautiful little men an' women, an' dogs, an' sheep that's on the shelf under the glass—an' there's ever so many pictures. One—two—three—four—five——”

“Why, Alice,” interrupted her father, laughing, “how your tongue does run on! I'm afeard all these fine sights will turn your little head. But about the pictures—tell me, Alice! what sort of pictures are they?” This he asked with some earnestness.

Alice went and looked at the pictures one after the other, with a most criticizing air. “Here's one, father, of a most beautiful lady with flowers on her head, an' great long drops in her ears, but then I think her neck is too much stripped for she hasn't a stitch on her shoulders at all.”

“Humph!” said her father.

“An' here's a great dandy of a man with a blue coat and red trousers, an' a green neck handkerchief—a fine-dressed gentleman he is, but mighty showy.”

“Humph—go on, Alice!” said her father again.

“O dear—O dear! but that's lovely!” cried Alice, almost aloud—“There's a great many people dancin' in a big room—every two and two—a gentleman an' a lady—with fine dress on them, just the same, you'd think as them others that I told you of before—my goodness, but that's beautiful. An' here's another picture of a race—indeed, father, it 'id put one in mind of the races at Ballintaggart!—an here's people sittin' at a

table with glasses and bottles on it, an' them holdin' up the glasses in their hands, an' laughin,' you'd think. That one's jist over your head, father!"

"But do you see no picture of the Blessed Virgin, or our Saviour, or any o' the Saints?"

"Well, no, father?" said Alice, after looking carefully around — "not one — there's a great, big horse on one, with ne'er a rider at all, an' there's a beautiful bunch of flowers on another, but I don't see any picture of a saint at all."

"It is just as I thought!" sighed the blind man to himself — "I'm afeard it's little religion there is in the same house." Aloud he said — "Sit down here beside me, Alice, dear! an' don't bother your head lookin' at the pictures. I don't want to hear any more about them. Come here till I give you a little advice — I know you like to hear your old father talk."

"Indeed, then, I do, father dear!" replied Alice, as she sprang to a seat at her father's side. What he said to her will be understood by the sequel of the story, for Alice acted scrupulously on the lessons of her father, and time will tell what those lessons were. At all events, they were cut short on that occasion by the entrance of a servant girl, who said, pertly: "The misthress bid me to tell you that dinner is ready — you'd want to make haste, for they're waitin' for you." Then she opened the door, and brought them through the kitchen into a small room beyond, where Harry and his wife were sitting at table, with a large, gruff-looking man who was introduced as "Mr. Thompson, a boarder of the house."

"Here, Alice, lead your father up here," said Mrs. Malone, remarking at the same time "dear me, Mr. Thompson, ain't it a poor thing to be blind

—I'm sure I wouldn't for anything want my sight — one must feel so uncomfortable."

"God keep you from knowing what it is, ma'am!" said Cormac with a faint sigh as he took the seat to which Alice conducted him, "but when it's God's will to leave us in darkness for a time, there would be no use in repinin' about it — I hope we'll have the light of heaven hereafter, an' that will make up for all."

"Let us go on with our dinner!" said Malone, while Thompson threw a significant glance at the hostess, and grunted out, "Ahem!" in a way that spoke superlative contempt for the newcomer and his mode of talking.

Things went on very well till Saturday, and in the course of the afternoon Cormac sent Alice to ask her aunt what chapel did the family go to, and if she would be kind enough to send some person with them to show them the way. Mrs. Malone was engaged in bottling beer in a room behind the shop, and immediately on hearing the message, threw open the door, and beckoned to her husband, who came in and closed the door.

"What do you want, Lizzie?"

"Why, here's Alice wantin' to know what *chapel* the family goes to — I suppose she means *church* — you can answer her better than I can — eh?" and she applied herself again to her work, with a chuckling laugh.

"What put that in your head, child?" asked the uncle, turning sharply to Alice.

"My father sent me to ask, uncle," replied the little girl, deprecatingly, — "we want to go to confession this evenin', an' besides to thank God before the holy altar for havin' brought us safe here."

"Dear me! how pious we are — hem!" said

Mrs. Malone, without pausing in her work, while Harry muttered something that sounded very like "troublesome old fool!" and then catching Alice by the shoulder in a tone that expressed anything but satisfaction: "Come along, girl — I'll speak to your father myself."

"Cormac!" said he, as he entered the room where the blind man was, "what in the devil's name put it in your head to be sendin' such a message as that to Lizzie — don't you know she's a Protestant?"

"No, indeed, Harry," replied Cormac with a start of surprise — "it never came into my head that your wife was not a Catholic — I'm sure if it had, I wouldn't have thought of sendin' to ask her such a question. I'm heart sorry, for her own sake, that it is so — but *you* can direct us to the chapel, an' tell me what priest to ask for when I go there."

"To be sure — to be sure I can," said Malone quickly, "I'll send little Tommy with you to the *Regalie** — that's where all the Irish go. If you want to go to confession, you can inquire for Father Smith."

So Harry hurried away, as though fearful of any further questions, and little Tommy, the bar-boy, very soon made his appearance, with a cunning leer on his small features. "Are you ready to go?" he asked, just popping in his head. "If you don't come now, I can't go at all, for the master wants me back right off."

"Run, Alice, an' get on your bonnet, an' reach me my hat an' stick," said Cormac, and Alice, having given him what he asked for, bounded

* The vulgar corruption of Recollet — the Church of the Recollet is one of the oldest in Montreal, and was for many years the only church of the Irish Catholics in that city.

away with the speed of a lapwing. She was scarcely a minute gone, when she returned, with her prayer-book in one hand and her father's beads in the other.

"Here's your beads, father, but just stoop down till I fix your cravat a little — there, now — that'll do. Come, now, father dear, for we're keepin' the boy waitin'."

After traversing two or three narrow streets in the St. Lawrence suburbs, they crossed what is now Craig street, and, ascending the hill, came out out on Notre Dame street, in front of the Recollet Church — then looking older than it now does — for its venerable front has of late years undergone considerable improvement.

"There's the church," said Tommy to Alice, "you've only to go up them steps, an' you're in it at once."

"The church," said Cormac, quickly — his mind being full of the thoughts of his brother-in-law having been so unfortunate as to marry a Protestant. "But it's a chapel we want* — we're no church people, thanks be to God!"

"Ain't you papists?" asked the boy, with his knowing smile.

"We're Catholics, my good boy — Romar Catholics."

"Well, that's your church — there ain't no *chapels* here for papists — they call them all *churches*. But I must be off, or the master will give me more kicks than ha'pence." And away ran Tommy on the wings of fear.

Entering into the church Cormac Riordan and

* In Ireland the Catholic Churches are everywhere through the country called "Chapels" — as in the days of Protestant ascendancy, they might not be dignified with the name of Churches.

his daughter knelt for a moment just inside the door, in silent adoration; then the blind man whispered, "Let us go up near the altar, Alice!" and they went accordingly, the little girl leading her father by the hand with such tenderness and caution as one would guide the steps of a young child. When they knelt at last before the sacred shrine where Jesus, they knew, was present in person, they poured out before him the fulness of their gratitude for his having brought them in safety over the great deep, and besought him to bestow upon them those graces of which they stood most in need—those graces that might strengthen them against temptation, and illumine their minds in the new and untried path before them.

"Don't forget to thank the Blessed Mother of God, Alice dear!" whispered the father, after they had prayed some time, "an' beg her to pray for us now—for, indeed, we want her prayers more than ever we did."

"I will, father," returned Alice, in the same low whisper. "I'll say the Litany of Loretto, before I begin to read my prayers for Confession."

Assuredly these prayers were heard—the prayers that arose from those guileless hearts—and when the father and daughter had been to confession, and left the church to return home, they felt conscious that Christ and his Blessed Mother had accepted their petitions.





CHAPTER II.

Bright ends and means make wisdom—*worldly wise*
Is but *half-witted*, at his highest praise.—YOUNG.

THE next day being Sunday, Cormac and his daughter went off early to church, heard two masses, and had the happiness of receiving the divine Sacrament of life and love, then having waited some time in the church after mass, in order to return thanks to their beneficent Master, who vouchsafed to visit them, and to invoke his blessing and protection for the time to come, they silently regained the street, and took the way to their present home. They talked but little to each other on the way, for Cormac was entirely occupied with the greatness of the favor he had just received, and Alice, though perhaps not quite so collected, yet knew very well that it was no time for idle or unnecessary conversation.

When they got home they found the family already at breakfast, and their welcome was none of the most cordial, even Malone himself looking somewhat discontented, as Alice *saw*, and her father *felt*. “Move aside there, will you?” cried Mrs. Malone, across the table to her husband—“make room for Cormac there near you—I’m sure I wish people *would* try and be in time—I told them last night that we always take our

breakfast on Sunday about nine o'clock. But I suppose people that go to church ought to be waited for, till whatever time they choose to come."

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Malone," said Cormac, while his whole face became scarlet with surprise and embarrassment. "I'm sure I wouldn't for anything keep you waitin' on us, an' I would have made it my business to be home long ago, only I thought that others might be out at church, too, an' that you wouldn't be havin' the breakfast till all the masses was over. Bless my soul, wasn't it a pity that I didn't know!" By this time he had taken his seat, with Alice beside him, and the little girl was busily engaged cutting the meat on his plate.

"Were *you* at church, Mr. Thompson?" inquired Mrs. Malone of the gruff-looking boarder, as she handed him his cup of tea. "I hope you're turning pious, too, as piety's all the fashion," and she glanced derisively at Cormac.

"No, I wasn't," growled Thompson, with unusual quickness — "I was taking a snooze till about five minutes ago. I always take a good long sleep on Sunday morning, let the church go as it may. Sunday is a day of rest, says I to myself, and then I turn over on the other side and wait till I am called to breakfast. What say you, Mr. Malone?" he added, addressing his host — "I reckon that you're of the same way of thinking — Sunday wouldn't be a day of rest, as it's said to be, if people were to get out of bed as early as they would on a week-day, and spend the remainder of the day praying — Rat me, if I can see the use of all this praying and church-going, and such like doings — it's all d——d humbug. That's what *I* say!"

"That's just what Harry often says," interrupted Mrs. Malone, who seemed to take a malicious pleasure in the pain her words gave Cormac; "he often says that this thing of religion is nothing in the world but a sham, and that it never *makes the pot boil brown*, nor gives the means of living independently. Upon my veracity, I couldn't endure a man that would be all the time bothering his brains about religion. Here's your tea, Cormac!" — No, Mr. Thompson! Harry and myself would never get along as well as we do only that we set religion aside altogether."

"An' how do you do that, ma'am?" inquired Cormac, "that is, if it's a fair question — I suppose you mean to say that you never argue religion amongst yourselves?"

"Argue it, indeed!" repeated Mrs. Malone, in a tone of supreme contempt, "I mean to say no such thing — neither he nor I ever troubles our heads about it, good, bad, or indifferent. It gives us no concern whatsoever."

"The Lord between us and harm!" cried Cormac, now fairly taken aback, "Why, now, Harry Malone!" and he turned his sightless eyes towards where his brother-in-law sat. "Is it possible that you — a Catholic — can live in that way? O, no, the mistress is only makin' her fun of me — an', indeed, she's heartily welcome to it."

"The devil cut the tongue out of you!" was the affectionate address of Harry in an undertone to his wife, and he shook his fist at her across the table, but to Cormac he said, with forced calmness: "Well, to tell you the truth, Cormac, when Lizzie an' myself made it up together we had a hard tug of it about the same religion — faith, we had so — *she* wouldn't give in to me nor of course I wouldn't give in to her, so, by jabbers! we had

nothing for it but to make an agreement that we'd let religion alone altogether. Ever since then we get on first rate; neither of us goes to any church, an' then we don't aggravate others. That's the way we do."

Alice looked sideways at her father and she saw that his cheek was pale, and his lips trembling with emotion, but he only said:

"O! then, I suppose you've got a lease of your life—for if you hadn't you'd have, at least, the fear of death before you."

"Well, I've as much of a lease," said Harry, with an attempt to put it off with a laugh, "I've as much of a lease as any man can have,—I enjoy the best of health, and have an appetite that nothing comes wrong to—I tell you, Death would have hard work to cut me down,"

Cormac shook his head and sighed deeply, but he knew that was not the place either for advice or reproach, so he affected to smile at Harry's remark, and willingly helped to change the conversation, though ever and anon Mrs. Malone would throw out a sly innuendo about *piety*, *hypocrisy*, and such like.

In the afternoon Cormac and his daughter sallied forth again to assist at vespers, and as they went along, the father suddenly said:—

"Alice, I'm very much afraid that we can't stay very long where we are. It isn't for the little huffs and buffs that we have to put up with, because we could easily bear such little trials as them, with God's help—nor it isn't so much on my own account as yours that I'll leave it, for I'm beginnin' to think that it's a bad place for the likes o' you, or indeed for any one. God commands us to shun danger, an' we're in the worst danger of all when we stay where there's no religion—

where they make a boast of serving the world, an' not serving God, their Creator and their Master. Alice, we must go out again on the wide world, let what will come of it — God is with us wherever we go, an' 'll raise up friends for us, an' provide us with the means of earnin' our livelihood."

"So then you'd rather be at home after all, sorry to leave my uncle's, for though they're very kind to us, an' give us good things to eat an' drink, somehow I don't feel myself like at home in it — there's such cursin' an' swearin' an' scoldin' from mornin' till night, an' then if one says a word about God, or the Blessed Virgin, or anything that way, there's a laugh raised, an' they all make game of one so that it's hard to stand it. I'm sure I'd rather be in a poor place, so as we'd live quiet and peaceable as we used to do in my Uncle Dinny's."

"So then you'd rather be at home after all, Alice?" inquired her father, with a smile.

"Indeed, indeed I would, father!" said Alice fervently — "there's no such fine furniture in our own old house at home as there is in my Uncle Harry's, nor there's not near so many windows, but then some way I think it's better to be there. Every one was so good an' kind — an' there was none o' this scoldin' an' snappin' at one another — we always had enough to eat, even if it wasn't as good as we get here. My goodness, father, wouldn't you rather be Uncle Dinny in his old frieze coat, smoking his pipe in the chimney corner when the supper was over, an' the Rosary said, than Uncle Harry with his fine clothes, sittin' in his parlor among all the pictures an' grand things, an' his face as red as a turkey-cock's head, an' him puffed up with pride, because he's so rich,

an' has such a grand house. Do you remember how comfortable and cosy we used to be, father, when Catty an' me would have the vessels washed up, an' we'd all sit down around the big turf fire—you'd be in one corner makin' creels* or baskets, an' poor Uncle Dinny would be smokin', his *dhudeen*. Catty 'd be spinnin' flax or wool, an' I'd be knittin'. An' then little Oyney, the herd-boy, how contented he'd be on his big stool over beyant my uncle, an' even Watch—poor dog! lyin' on the hearthstone, with his eyes shut, an' him openin' them, now an' then, to look around at us all, as if he wanted to say, 'aren't we all very snug here!'—ah, father! I'm afraid America's not near so good a place as *home*, after all—I'm sure I wish we were at home again!" By this time poor Alice had worked herself into a little fit of excitement, and the tears trickled in large drops from her eyes as memory brought back the quiet comfort of her old home and the genuine kindness, and the cheerful piety of its humble inmates.

Nor was her father less deeply moved, though he thought it his duty to disguise his emotion. There was a smile on his face, then, but his heart was sad and heavy as he replied: "No, Alice dear! don't say that—we wouldn't be here, dear, only God decreed it for us, an' we're not to murmur if we don't find everything to our liking. Let us always conform our wishes to the will of God, an' then we'll always have peace in our minds an' hearts, let us be where we may, or let what will happen; an' besides, Alice, we're not to look for comfort or happiness here below."

* A sort of deep basket in which the Irish peasantry carry turf or potatoes—they are hung in pairs over the back of the horse or ass, on wooden pegs fixed in the straddle.

"Hush, rather dear, — here's the church!" said Alice — "take care — put up your foot — here's the steps."

During all the time of Vespers Cormac Riordan remained in rapt communion with that God whom he had but a few hours before received into his bosom, and while joining in spirit with the praise and thanksgiving of the psalms whose music filled the little church, he made it his special prayer that he and his daughter might be speedily drawn forth from the lion's den into which they had fallen lest the tender mind of his precious child might be contaminated by that *evil communication* which *corrupts good morals*. "And you, O sweet Mary!" he added, "you never turn a deaf ear to us when we call on you for aid — I depend on you, then, Mother most merciful an' most loving, that you'll obtain this favor for me. Only beseech your divine Son to open a door of escape for us, an' I know He'll do it, of course we wouldn't refuse *you*, an' it would be strange if He did, for who's so near or dear to him as his own mother — the sweetest and best of mothers!"

So Cormac cast his care on the Lord, and relied on the assistance of the *Virgin most merciful*, and he went home that evening with as light a heart as though his circumstances had undergone a marked change for the better. And yet all that evening he had much to bear, for amid the drunken revelry of the tavern (from which he was separated only by a thin partition) his ears were constantly assailed by filthy obscenity and not unfrequently by scoffs and sarcasms levelled against religion. And there sat Cormac, in the loneliness of his visual darkness, (for he had purposely sent Alice up stairs under pretence of arranging the things in their box so that she, at least, might not be

scandalized) waiting anxiously to hear his brother-in-law's voice reproving these hideous blasphemers and scoffers, but no such thing did he hear. At times, indeed, he heard Malone speak, but it was only to crack a joke or help on the fun. The blind man had just taken out his beads, and was endeavoring to fix his thoughts on the mysteries of the Rosary, when he heard a door from an inner room open, and Mrs. Malone speaking to her husband as she entered the shop. Her words were evidently meant to raise a laugh among the customers,

"Why, Harry! you ought to be a little more cautious these times — *you* know, though our friends here don't, that we've got a walking prayer-book in the house. It's a fact!" she added, as though some one had differed from her in opinion — "I tell you what, boys, there's a brother-in-law of Harry's just come out from the old country, and you'd die laughing to hear him talk about religion. If he had his eyesight there would be no standing him."

"O! the old chap's blind — is he? — Lord, what a pity!"

"Ay! he's as blind as the blind man of Jericho, that I heard the priest preachin' about long ago when I used to go to church." This was from Malone, and the others set up a loud laugh.

"Then you don't go now, Harry? — you've grown too cute for that, eh, old fellow?"

"Why, faith, I don't trouble the church very often!" said Harry, as he drew himself up and stretched down his vest over his capacious paunch — "I haven't got much time for that — I leave it to them that has nothing else to mind — a man that has got business on his hands has no time to spare for going to church, or saying his prayers — the old women in Ireland do all that for us."

"Right again, Harry!" cried two or three together — "you wouldn't be half so good a fellow as you are, if you were a church-goer. They're the greatest bores in creation, with their everlasting prayers and fal-de-rals. Here, old boy! send us over another pint of rum — that last was capital, and just set us a-going in prime style. Here's your health, Mr. Malone! — and yours, ma'am, wishing you both all sorts of good luck." Then having emptied his glass, he clapped it down, saying with a hearty smack — "and for my own sake, I wish I may never toast either of you in worse stuff! — By jolly! it's the real *stingo* — and no mistake!"

"Many thanks to you, Alick!" said Mrs. Malone, as she opened the door to retire — "it always does me good to hear you talk, for you're never without your joke. I've a great mind to have the blind man of Jericho, as Harry calls him, offer up a *pater* and *ave* for you. Good night, boys!" and off went Mrs. Malone.

"O Lord my God!" murmured Cormac in deep, deep sorrow, as he arose and groped his way out of the room, fearful of hearing yet more hurtful discourse — "O Lord my God! keep me and mine from being engrossed by the things of this wretched world — forgettin' himself and his God that way! — O! sweet Lord Jesus, take me an' my little one out of this place, if it be your holy will to save us! — I don't care how poor our lodgin' may be, only to be where your name is honored, an' religion attended to."

Just then he heard the door opening, and the next minute the soft voice of Alice calling "Father, are you here, father?"

"I am, Alice — but what's wrong with you?"

"O nothing at all, father, only when I went

back to where I left you, an' didn't find you there, I wondered where you went to. Sure it's quite dark in here."

"Well! you know it's all the same to me, Alice," said her father, and he tried to speak cheerfully — "But you needn't tell me that there's nothing the matter with you, for I know by your voice that something has disturbed you — tell me, my child, what is it?"

"Why, then, it's nothin' in the world, father, but some talk that I heard goin' on in the shop there abroad as I was passin' through the big room where I left you a while ago. I hope you'll not ask me to tell you what I heard, father, for, indeed, I couldn't bring myself to come over it." She did all she could to keep from crying, but her father heard the deep sobs which she, nevertheless, strove to stifle, and he knew that the little girl heard that which oppressed her young heart with a load of sorrow — "She has heard them makin' game of her poor blind father," said he to himself — "an' the words they said have touched her to the quick."

"Alice," said he, "I heard them at it myself, so I can guess what it is that grieves you, but never mind — they slight us, an' mock us for three things that we have no cause to be ashamed of. First, because it has pleased God to deprive me of my sight, — next, because we're poor an' dependin' on others — at least they think so, an' last of all, because we profess to serve God. Now, my daughter, you have sense enough, an' I hope religion enough, to know that *my* blindness an' *our* poverty came from God, an' if we bear them as we ought, they'll be crowns of glory to us hereafter, an' as for the other, it ought to be our only pride an' glory in this world, because we serve an' fol-

low a Master that's above all the kings o' the earth. So long as we don't do anything to anger Him, or to disgrace Him, we need care but little who laughs at us. But it's time to go to bed, Alice, an' if you'll jist go an' ask a candle for yourself from the girl in the kitchen, — but, now I think of it — where's the one you had up stairs?"

"I left it in the kitchen, father, before I went to look for you."

"Here, Alice, give me your hand to the foot o' the stairs, an' I can find my way up. I want no light — that's one comfort!"

In order to reach the stairs they had to go through the passage which ran parallel with the shop, and they could not avoid hearing what was going on at the moment.

"I tell you what it is now," said a voice which they had not heard before in the conversation, "I'll not stand this. By the good daylight! I will not. I'll take a joke as well as any man, and give one, too, but I wouldn't let the best man that ever stepped in shoe leather make little of a priest before me, or despise my religion. If Mr. Malone there chooses to let such work go on in his place, it's more shame for him, but I'm blessed if I'll stand by and hear it."

While Cormac was endeavoring to think of where it was that he had heard that voice before, Alice whispered to him, "Ah, then, father, do you hear the man that brought our things here — the carter, they call him — do you hear how well he stands up for his religion?"

"I do, Alice dear, I do hear him!" replied her father, "God bless him — poor fellow! let him be what he may! You're right enough, child, it is him, an' no other. But listen a minute."

"Why, Dan Corrigan!" said a hoarse, rough

voice, in a gibing tone, "is it you that takes it upon you to defend the priests — if the old blind chap inside here was to take it up, one wouldn't so much mind; for he's what I call a real thorough-going papist, trooping off with his daughter to church early in the morning the very first Sunday he was here, and being to confession the day before, — *he* might speak up for religion, but, by Jove, if *you* profess the same religion, I rather think you don't live up to it, so you're no more than the name of a papist. I'd advise you to let the priests fight their own battles, my fine fellow! They're able enough to do it, and what is more, by all accounts, there can be nothing said of them that they don't deserve. Take my advice, and don't disturb yourself about them. Now, I ask you as a friend, Dan, how long is it since you set your foot inside a church door? Eh, my lad — tell me that?"

"It's no business of yours, Sam Thompson," retorted Corrigan, in a raised voice, "if I went oftener to church, it isn't *here* I'd be this evening, nor in company with *you*, and if I don't go as often as I should, it's all the worst for myself; but I tell you again, don't speak that way of the clergy in my presence, or by this and by that, I'll let you feel the weight of a pair of Irish fists."

"Take care of that, Dan," cried Thompson, angrily, "two can use them weapons! I owe you no ill-will; but don't threaten me, if you value your bones; don't, I tell you!"

Here Malone interposed, and came between the belligerent parties, throwing the blame, however, on Corrigan; "I'm surprised at you, Dan," he said, "to come into my shop and raise such a row of a Sunday evening. I'm sure you'd be the last man I'd suspect of doing such a thing."

"Me raise a row!" cried Dan, growing more and more excited, "what for do you say that *I* did it? You don't throw the blame on them that was blackenin' and slanderin' your religion (but sure *you* have no religion!), an' runnin' down the clergy; but when I stand up and take their part, then I'm down for raisin' a row. The back o' my hand to you, Mr. Malone!" he added, contemptuously, "I always took you for a decent man, and stood up for you as I'll never do again; for a man that would call himself a Catholic, and let these lads go on as they do in his presence, isn't worth a *traneen*. I'm done with you, Mister Malone, and, indeed, you'll lose many a customer by this evening's work. Now, Sam Thompson," he added, going up to the surly Englishman, notwithstanding Harry's attempts to keep him back, "now look here, Sam! this is Sunday evening, an' I don't wish to raise my hand to you, but to-morrow, or any other day that you choose to appoint, I'm ready and willing to try my hand on you for backbiting and slanderin' of our clergy; so be on the lookout, for I don't want to take you short."

Thompson's reply was a heavy blow with his shut fist, which, striking poor Corrigan right on the breast, sent him reeling across the floor. In another minute he was pummelling the Englishman with all his might, interlarding his blows with various exclamations of defiance and contempt. "There, now, you treacherous bulldog! take that, you black-hearted villain! that'll teach you to talk hard of the priests! Ha! you rascal! you thought to do for me that time — you want to murder me, but, by jingo! I'll give you as good as you bring!" Alas! Thompson had a party to back him, and poor Dan had only his own good fists. Malone was heard dragging him away, while two or three of

the others, taking an ungenerous advantage of his being alone, scrupled not to lend a hand against him. Bravely and stoutly he continued to hold his own, though he had no longer time or breath to season his buffets with words, and the combat was still going on, for Dan had got his back against the wall, and armed himself with a stick which, fortunately for himself, had caught his eye standing in a corner, but just then the inner door flew open and Mrs. Malone rushed out crying, "Why, what in the world are you about, or have you all taken leave of your senses? Harry Malone, isn't this a fine story for the neighbors to have? Not another word with any of you now, or I'll send off for the police this very minute." Malone, with becoming submission, retired on the word to his *sanctum* behind the counter, and Corrigan's assailants falling back, he was left standing "alone in his glory," stick in hand — whereupon Mrs. Malone ordered him to quit the house instantly, "for," said she, "there can't be luck where such a vagabond frequents."

"O, then, never say it twice, ma'am," replied Dan, as replacing the friendly stick in its corner, he wiped the perspiration from his heated brow. "If ever you catch me here again, you may swear that I've lost my senses — for, please God, I'll never cross your threshold again so long as my name's Dan Corrigan. For Thompson and these other cowardly fellows, perhaps I'd be even with them some of these fine days, and as for you, Mr. Malone! the worst I wish you is that you mayn't be sorry for all this when it's too late?"

Cormac waited to hear no more, but with a heavy sigh ascended the stairs. Alice would not quit him till she had conducted him to his bedside, and she bid him "good night." He charged

her not to forget praying for her uncle, that God might turn his heart back into the ways of peace and holiness. "I'd like for us to offer up our prayers together, Alice," said he, "but I don't wish to keep you too long now, for fear your aunt might be wantin' you. Go now, my child! an' may God bless you this night an' forevermore."

"Where's your father, Alice?" inquired her uncle some time after, when she went down stairs, and entered the room where he and his wife were pledging Sam Thompson (and he them) in nut-brown ale, the shop being now closed, and the day's turmoil over.

"He's gone to bed, uncle." And so saying, Alice sat down quietly in a remote corner of the room.

"Well! to be sure, what an unsociable man that is!" cried Harry.

"Come over here, Alice!" said Mrs. Malone, in a coaxing tone, "Come over, dear, and take a drink of ale. Here, Harry, fill out some for her in this tumbler."

"No, thank you, ma'am," said Alice, "I don't wish for any."

"Ho! ho!" said Thompson, who by the by, bore the mark of Dan Corrigan's Irish fist in the guise of a black eye. "Ho! ho! now I remember what you told me about the prudishness of your young niece, who would not even taste the punch, because the old hunk forbid her. I say, my little wench! wouldn't you take a tumbler of ale from me?" And he tipped a wink at Mrs. Malone. "See here — I'll give you this bran new shilling to buy sugar-stick if you'll only come and drink my health. Come — that's a good lass!"

"Indeed, then, I'll not, Mr. Thompson," said Alice, rising from her seat, and speaking in a tone so decided that it was evident her feelings were excited. "I wouldn't taste beer, ale, or spirits of any kind if you'd give me a guinea instead of a shilling."

"And why not, my pretty May-bird?"

"Why not!" repeated Alice, coming a step nearer the table, while her glowing cheek and kindling eye told how keenly she felt the insult offered her. "Why, because I know it's wrong — that's the *raison*."

"And how do you know that?" persisted Thompson.

"Because my father says so, an' when he says it, that's enough for me!"

"Your father says it!" repeated Sam, with infinite contempt, "but what's that to the purpose — the old fellow ain't here now, and his opinion is not worth much at the best!"

"God tells me to *honor my father*," replied Alice, firmly, "an' my religion tells me that if I don't do it, I'll be lost,—it's not only when he's to the fore that I am to obey him, but jist as well when his back's turned, because God didn't say *honor your father and your mother when they're present*, but only *honor your father and your mother*,—an' another thing, Mr. Thompson, I don't like to hear any one callin' my father an old fellow—I'd rather be called any ugly name myself." She was entirely overcome by her feelings, and burst into tears, covering her face with both her hands.

"Hillo!" cried Thompson, "what a fuss is here about nothing! what did I say to make her cry so?"

"Don't cry, Alice, don't cry," said her uncle

kindly, for he was touched by the sight of her tears. "He was only joking, Alice, for he thinks a great deal of your father—indeed he does. Dry up your tears and come over here—here's a sixpence for you to buy candy to-morrow when you go out. Mr. Thompson mustn't joke any more with you, for I see you're not up to his ways."

"Get a candle from Betty," said her aunt, "and go off to bed. What a foolish girl you are to be so easy made cry! But never mind, it'll be all over to-morrow—don't say anything of it to your father."

"Indeed I'll not, ma'am! not a word, for I never tell my poor father anything that 'id grieve him, if I can help it. He has sorrow an' trouble enough without me carryin' stories to make him worse." So saying, she left the room.

Not a word was spoken for some minutes after Alice had disappeared, but the three sat looking at each other in mute wonder. "After all, Lizzie," said Malone, speaking slowly and earnestly, "After all, the child is in the right, and we were all wrong."

His wife and Thompson laughed out on hearing him speak so. "Hoity-toity!" cried Lizzie, "is that Harry Malone or is it not? As I live, Cormac Riordan or the daughter has bit him, and we'll have him mad with religion like them. Look at him, Sam! wouldn't you think his face grew two inches longer since that little prate-box gave us our lesson?"

"I quite agree with you, Mrs. Malone!" said her worthy ally, "a serious face doesn't at all become my friend Harry. Nature intended him for 'a right good fellow' and I'd be sorry to see him turning canter on our hands. He's not cut out for that, I promise you!"

Harry only shook his head, and fetched something like a sigh, but the next minute he was as jovial as ever, and quaffed draught after draught of his own *brown stout* till even Thompson thought it high time to follow Mrs. Malone's example, and retire to bed, which that excellent woman had done half an hour before.

When Alice Riordan got into her own little room, she carefully closed the door, and then sitting down on her bed she wept with all the *abandon* of childish grief. When she had somewhat eased her heart, she wiped her eyes and knelt to say her prayers, not forgetting her father's injunction to pray for her uncle. "I'll say five *paters* an' five *aves* for him," murmured she to herself, "in honor of the five wounds of our blessed Saviour." So she did, and then arising from her knees, she undressed herself and went to bed, with a lighter heart and a more hopeful spirit.





CHAPTER III.

The nominal professions of religion with which many persons content themselves, seem to fit them for little else than to disgrace Christianity by their practice. — MILNER.

NEXT morning the breakfast was late and uncomfortable. Mrs. Malone was out of humor, and her husband seemed to regard her with a deprecating air, meant probably to mollify the indignation with which she glanced from time to time at Sam Thompson's bruised and discolored face. It was, indeed, a doleful spectacle, for Dan Corrigan had succeeded to admiration in leaving his mark on every feature, and the natural gruffness of the physiognomy was considerably increased by two black eyes, nose to match them, and an upper lip swelled to a most undue protuberance. Oh, what a face was the face of Sam Thompson, and of its woful plight its owner seemed sensible, for he sat with his back to the light, and though his chagrin had not taken away much of his appetite, yet every mouthful was seasoned by some guttural ejaculation of wrath and defiance, to each of which his hostess made a sympathizing answer. Indeed, it would appear that Mrs. Malone felt the insult offered to Thompson as though her own flesh and bone had undergone it, and her husband came in for his share

when she poured out the vial of her wrath. Cormac and his daughter went on with their breakfast in silence, thankful that no blame was attached to them, and carefully avoiding all superfluous conversation lest they might stumble on saying something that might give offence.

"Lizzie!" said Malone, after having waited patiently for some time, "Lizzie! will you fill me out my tea, if you please — I gave you my cup a good while ago, an' I think you are forgetting it."

"Just wait till I'm ready, will you? — I'm sure it's not easy for me to have my wits about me with such a sight as that before my eyes" — pointing at the disfigured countenance of Thompson. Then as her ire waxed higher, she put down the unfilled cup again and looked daggers at her husband. "Indeed, Harry Malone! you ought to be ashamed to hold up your head this morning after last night."

"Why, zounds, woman! what could I do?" cried Harry, "didn't I do my best to sunder them?"

"Ay! sunder them!" repeated the wife, contemptuously — "to be sure you did, but not till that low-lived scoundrel Corrigan had given poor decent Mr. Thompson what he'll not get over for a while. Don't talk to me about what you did, for any one could see with half an eye that you took that villain's part — but why not — of course you papists must stand to one another, and we may be thankful that we don't get our throats cut among you — bloodthirsty crew that you are — I'm sure it's enough to make the blood boil in one's veins to see a quiet, decent man that wouldn't hurt a dog beat and bruised in that way."

Malone's anger began to rise, for he knew very

well that he had by no means deserved this castigation, and he struck his fist violently on the table, swearing an oath not fit to be repeated — “You’re enough to drive a man mad, Lizzie — that’s what you are. You know very well, if you’d only acknowledge it, that I didn’t take Corrigan’s part, though it’s what I ought to have done when every one else was against him. If it goes to that, too, it wasn’t his fault at all — he only stood up for his religion and his clergy when Mr. Thompson and the others went too far with their mocking and game-making — I’m sartin sure the poor fellow can’t be blamed for what happened, for he got no sort of fair play.”

“If that’s your opinion, Mr. Malone!” said Thompson — “I’ll never eat another meal in your house — when you don’t seem to be at all sorry for the abuse I’ve got in your house and in your presence, you can have my place for that rascally Corrigan — perhaps his money will be better to you than mine.”

On hearing this, Mrs. Malone started up in a passion, and seemed half inclined to wage unequal warfare with her husband, at whom she shook her little fist in a threatening manner. “Do you hear that now?” she cried — “Isn’t this pretty work we have with yourself and your low, dirty Irish carter?”

“Well! well!” exclaimed Harry, looking around with a bewildered air, “was ever any poor man so belied as I am?” His eyes fell on Cormac, and he suddenly appealed to him. “Cormac Riordan, were you within hearing of the quarrel last night — if you were, you’ll tell the truth — now, did I, or did I not, side with Corrigan?”

“Well! since you put the question to me, Har-

ry!" said Cormac, "I must say that I don't think you did. Indeed, *I* thought you were more for Mr. Thompson here, an' from what I h'ard I'm sure I couldn't think anything else."

"And how did you come to hear anything about it?" asked Mrs. Malone sharply — "I didn't know that such pious Christians as you were in the habit of listening to what didn't concern them."

Cormac's reply was prevented by the appearance of little Tommy, who cried out in a sort of undertone — "Hush! here's the priest — he wants to see the master."

"Go out to him, Harry!" said Mrs. Malone, "and don't bring him in here — mind that now! — go on, I say, or that young rascal will be showing him in — why don't you go?"

"I'll be hanged if I do, then," was the resolute reply, and with a very determined shake of the head, Harry Malone sat down again on the seat he had just quitted — "you needn't think I'm going to stand the whole brunt, for I know very well he has heard of what happened last night —"

What more he intended to say was lost to the listeners, for the door opened and in walked Father Smith: — quick as lightning Mrs. Malone absconded in the opposite direction, and after her moved Thompson, covering her retreat with his bulky person, When no better would do, Harry advanced to meet the priest, while Alice led her father to a seat at the upper end of the room.

Father Smith was a man of corpulent figure, and round red face, enlivened by a pair of bright gray eyes. His features were all expressive of a cheerful turn of mind, and there was that in the twinkle of his full, clear eye which denoted a dash

of sly humor, though the whole countenance was one that expressed benevolence and what is called *good nature*. When he spoke his voice was rather of the roughest, and his manner was abrupt and decided.

There was a slight movement perceptible in the muscles around his mouth, as he caught a glimpse of the retiring figures of Mrs. Malone and Sam, but he of course made no allusion to their abrupt exit.

"So, Mr. Malone! I'm told you had a row here last night. Are you not ashamed to have such doings going on in your house on the Lord's Day?"

"Well, indeed, Father Smith!" returned Malone, as he stood twirling his thumbs, and looking at everything but the face of his interrogator—"indeed, your reverence, it wasn't my fault, for I'm blessed if I gave any of them more than a couple of glasses, and as I'm a living man this good Monday morning there was only four or five of them in it altogether!"

"Yes, but you see even that small number was quite sufficient to bring disgrace on your house. Mind I don't speak to you of the insult offered to God by profaning his Sabbath, for unfortunately I am too well aware that you care nothing for that—but even in a worldly point of view, is it not your interest to keep your house orderly and decent? How did *this* happen at all, or who gave rise to it?"

"Well! indeed, sir, it was Dan Corrigan, him that keeps the cart, and——"

"I know him very well!" said the priest, shortly—"I've had my eye on him for some time—with whom did he fight, or was *he* the aggressor—I mean, was he chiefly in fault?"

"Why, my wife says he was, sir, but I think she's a little too hard on him — however, sir, here's my brother-in-law that says he overheard it all, and he can tell you better than I can how the case stands. Alice, bring your father over here — that's a good girl."

The priest had been observing the blind man and the little girl with marked attention, and when Alice dropped a low courtesy, and her father bowed low (knowing that he stood before the priest), they had already made a favorable impression on his mind. Moreover he recognized them at once, and kindly patting the little girl's head with one hand he took hold of her father's hand with the other and shook it warmly.

"Aha!" he said, with a friendly smile, "I saw you both in the Recollet on Saturday — you were at confession, I believe, and yesterday morning I gave you communion — yes, yes — I can depend on *your* word, and will thank you to tell me how this disturbance happened."

Cormac simply related the whole affair as it had occurred, omitting, however, with intuitive kindness, the culpable and contemptible conduct of Malone. The latter seemed considerably relieved when he found himself even better than he expected in the narrative, and from time to time as it proceeded, he broke in with an exulting, "There now — Father Smith! — didn't I tell you I wasn't in fault?"

But Father Smith's penetration was seldom at fault, and at the close he again shook hands with Cormac, saying as he did so: "I see, my good friend, I see! — you have told the truth, but not the whole truth — no matter — you have told me enough to confirm my opinion that the whole fault lies on the shoulders of Mr. Malone."

"Why Lord bless me! Father Smith," cried Harry with a look of blank surprise — "how do you make that out?"

"In this way," replied the priest,— "that when you violate the positive commandment of God, and openly profane the Sabbath by carrying on your business as though it were a week-day, you must expect that they who enter your tavern on that day will be the very lowest and most disreputable in the community, and when you gather such people about you, and supply their craving appetite with the poisonous draught that intoxicates, the blame of the consequences assuredly rests on you. Now this disgraceful row has disturbed the whole neighborhood, and people are wondering that you will persist in keeping your shop open on Sunday. If you have no fear of God, you will at least shrink from the disgrace of keeping a disorderly house, and I trust that this will be the end of your selling liquor on the Lord's Day. With regard to the subject of this dispute," he said, turning to Cormac, "I have not a word to say. With the ribald brawls of a tavern we — the priests of God's church — have nothing to do, so that I am as little thankful to Corrigan who defended us, as to his opponents who call forth his anger by abusing us."

"Well, indeed, your reverence," said Cormac, modestly, "I didn't feel that way at all when I was listenin', an' to tell you the truth, my heart warmed to poor Corrigan for standin' up as he did for his religion. I declare to you, sir, it would make your blood boil to hear them fellows — indeed, it would, an' if I hadn't been as I am, I couldn't have kept from goin' in to help Corrigan when he was gettin' the worst of it, an' no one to back him." Cormac spoke so warmly and with

such an air of determination that the priest laughed.

"All alike," said he, "all alike — whether an Irish Catholic be pious or worldly, whether he be a frequenter of God's holy house or of the tavern — whether he sits at the feet of our Mother, the church, and lovingly hearkens to her voice, or heedlessly follows the evil counsels of the world, the germ of faith is still strong within him, and though Satan may lure him a while from the paths of virtue, he can never make him an infidel — amid all his wanderings in the desert of sin, he cherishes a love and respect for religion. So, my worthy friend! you need not wonder at Corrigan's sturdy defence."

"No more I do, please your reverence," replied Cormac, with simple earnestness, "I'd wonder a great deal more if he acted any other way, for let a man be ever so far gone astray, he ought to know very well that he's not to listen to any one slanderin' the clergy; an' another thing, sir, I don't call him a Catholic that'll do such a thing — no, I don't, if he was my own brother."

Malone winced under this home thrust, and the more so as Father Smith's laughing eye was fixed upon him. "Well, Cormac," he said, with ill-disguised vexation, "you're making a little too free, I think, considerin' that you're a stranger to his reverence."

"If I am," replied Cormac, turning his face towards the priest, "if I am, I humbly ask his pardon. May be I *did* say more than I ought, but I hope his reverence will forgive me, for, indeed, I wouldn't wish to disrespect him."

"On the contrary," said Father Smith, "I am much pleased with you, and hope we may be better acquainted. This is your daughter — is she not?"

"Yes, sir, that's my little girl," replied the fond father, laying his hand on his daughter's head.

"What is your name, my child?"

"Alice, sir—Alice Riordan!" and she made a low courtesy."

"Well, Alice, do you know your Catechism?" inquired the priest—"I expect you do, for I know my reverend brethren in Ireland are very particular with you young ones about learning it."

To this question the father replied, "I think you'll find her well instructed in her religion, sir, at least our own priest at home, Father Daly, used to have her teachin' a class in the chapel. He gave her a nice book, sir, when we were comin' away—an' a pair o' beads."

"Very good—very good," said the priest—"that's just what I expected to hear, for your daughter looks as though she had been brought up in the fear and knowledge of God. Now, tell me—what do you propose doing here?—how do you mean to get along?"

"O! he needn't be fretting much about that, sir!" said Malone quickly, "you see we here have neither chick nor child, and as we have enough and to spare, I just sent home for my niece here—her mother was my sister, your reverence. My wife has taken quite a fancy to her, and we intend to do for her as if she was our own, and as to Cormac, why, he's as welcome as the flowers of May—it would be a bad day when Harry Malone wouldn't share his best loaf with him, for not to speak of her that's gone, we were schoolfellows in our young days, and great friends all out—while I have a roof to cover me, Father Smith, Cormac Riordan will never

want a home, since he's not able to do for himself."

"Many thanks to you, Harry—may the Lord bless you!" murmured the blind man, much affected by the honest warmth with which his brother-in-law spoke. "Only I knew *that* was in you, I'd never have consented to come at all. But still ——"

He hesitated, and then stopped short, and the priest hastily took up the unfinished sentence. "But still Cormac Riordan doesn't want to live on the kindness of his friends—he'd rather try to do something for his living, and have his little girl put in some way of doing for herself. Am I not right, Cormac?"

"Indeed, then," said Cormac, in a cheerful tone, as though he felt relieved of a painful task—"indeed, your reverence, that's just what I wanted to say, but somehow I couldn't bring myself to say it. If there was anything at all that a blind man could do to earn a livin' I'd be thankful for it, an' Alice here, though she's not thirteen till next Candlemas, she's always sayin' that she's able enough to work if she'd only be put in the way of doin' it. Harry Malone an' his wife have been good and kind to us, an' I'll never forget either of them while there's breath in my body, but then it isn't right for any one to be livin' in idleness at other people's expense, while God spares the health."

Harry was again about to speak, but Father Smith said quickly, "Well! I'll see what can be done for both of you—have you any money?"

"I have, sir—I have six pounds in goold, that my brother at home gave me, over an' above our passage an' outfittin'. But it wouldn't go far in keepin' us up."

"No, Cormac," said the priest — "it would not. You must put it in the Savings Bank where it will bear some little interest, — keep it untouched as long as you can. I must go now, for I have stayed longer than I intended. Come to the Seminary to-morrow at a quarter past twelve and inquire for me. Any one at all will show you the way. Mr. Malone, I would speak with you in private before I go."

"Certainly, sir," said Harry as he hastened to lead the way into the parlor, though his face testified anything but pleasure, and as he stood back to let the priest pass out first, Alice heard him sigh, and clear his throat repeatedly, giving note of preparation for some great engagement.

At that moment Mrs. Malone's well-bedecked head was protruded through an opposite door, and her eyes were cast inquiringly round the room. "So he's gone — is he?" she asked, alluding to the priest.

"No, ma'am!" said Alice, "if it's Father Smith you mane, he's gone into the parlor there with Uncle Harry."

"Is it possible?" she exclaimed, introducing her whole person into the room. "What in the world can they be about?" and crossing the floor on tiptoe she applied her eye to the key-hole — looked in for a moment, then clapped her ear where her eye had lately been, and seemed to listen attentively. In a few minutes the murmur of voices died away in the parlor, but Mrs. Malone stirred not from her post, thinking, doubtless, that the conversation had only paused to be again renewed. Cormac whispered to his daughter to lead him from the room, and they were both moving away, when the parlor door flew open, and in rolled Mrs. Malone — head foremost,

making a regular prostration before the astonished priest, while her husband, who had partially sustained the shock of her fall, staggered back against the table, which narrowly escaped being upset.

A merry burst of laughter from the priest as he stooped to raise the fallen mistress of the mansion—a hearty curse from her husband, with a “What the devil, Lizzie—are you drunk or mad?” and even Alice could not help laughing, though in consideration of her aunt’s feelings she did her best to keep quiet.

“Dear me! Alice, what’s that?” demanded her father—“what was it that fell?”

“Only our worthy hostess that fell through the door,” replied Father Smith, with a comical glance at the disconsolate lady, and another at her equally mortified husband. “This melancholy accident will, I hope, be a useful lesson to you, Mr. Malone, teaching you never to open a door too rashly, at least until you know whether it be safe or not. Good morning, Mr. Malone—I hope you’ll think of what I have been saying. Good morning, ma’am, I trust your bones are all safe.”

Mrs. Malone was keenly alive to the ironical tone of the priest’s words, but she was far too angry, and far too much mortified to attempt an answer, so she sat sullen and silent, rejecting with disdain all Alice’s attempts to comfort her. Harry accompanied Father Smith to the door, and poor Cormac set about making his way alone to his own little room up stairs, knowing that Alice must needs remain with her aunt.

When Malone returned to the parlor he found his wife primed and loaded ready for the charge. “Now, I tell you one thing, Harry Malone!” she cried, or rather screamed, “if you begin to bring

these priests about the house, I'll leave it to yourself and them. There can't be luck where they frequent, and *that* you can't attempt to deny. See what has come of it already—that man wasn't half an hour in the place and here I've got a sprain in my arm that I'll not get over for many a day. There, you see it's quite powerless with me."

"I wish it had been your tongue, Lizzie, dear!" rejoined the affectionate husband.

"O, yes! my tongue—my tongue is always a great trouble to you—I suppose that priest gave you a good lecture about your Protestant wife."

"You ought to know best whether he did or not—perhaps the old fellow that put it in your head to listen at the door, will prompt you to tell lies on the priest. You know as well as I do what he was talking about."

"Ah! he was at you about going to confession, and mending your life, and going to mass and all such stuff, and I'm sure you gave him plenty of fair promises, whether you mean to keep them or not."

"It's nothing to you whether I do or not—but here I am like a fool losing my time talking to a woman that never listens to reason. Alice, don't mind anything she'll be saying to you about the priests—she'd poison them all if she could."

So saying, Harry slammed the door after him and hurried off to his shop, where he was very soon absorbed in the measurement and sale of brandy and gin, to the entire exclusion of all thoughts connected with his soul's salvation.

"You can go now! said Mrs. Malone testily to Alice—"Since there's such danger in being with me, you had better clear out—I can do very well without you—go away, girl, I don't

want you." Alice left the room in silence and went to her father, where he sat alone in his room.

"Well, indeed, father!" she said pettishly, "my aunt's a very curious woman all out; I don't like her at all. If you'd only hear how she went on at my uncle, throwin' all the blame of her sprained arm on him and Father Smith, though it was all her own fault, puttin' her ear to the keyhole, to listen to what they were sayin' inside. I'm sure when uncle opened the door, he didn't know that she was leaning against it. An' then she sent me away, an' wouldn't let me be next or near her, because uncle told me not to mind what she'd say about the priests."

"Alice, my child, it's not right to talk of her in that way. A Christian ought always to overlook people's faults, an' say nothing at all about them, unless there's good to be said. Never mind your aunt's little failings, but pray to God to keep *you* from fallin' into sin. I hope in God that Father Smith will help us to get out of this, for, to tell you the truth, I see it doesn't answer us at all to be here. Let us recommend ourselves to the Blessed Virgin, and ask her to assist us with her prayers, an' then do you go down stairs, and see if there's isn't something for you to do. It's always best to be employed in one way or another, for the devil has great power over them that lives in idleness. Go down, my daughter!"

The day passed over slowly and cheerlessly. What with Mrs. Malone's sprained arm, and Thompson's battered face, and Malone's biting sarcasms on his wife, and her caustic replies, it was no small relief to Cormac Riordan and Alice when bedtime came, and they were permitted to lay down their heads in quiet, after the wear and tear of the day.

In the morning, the breakfast was scarcely over when Alice got ready to go out, and was quite disappointed when she found that three long hours must elapse before the time appointed by Father Smith. Every half hour or so she paid a visit to the clock, and at last she ran up stairs to her father in high glee, with the announcement that it was past twelve o'clock. "So it's time for us to go, father — you know the priest said we were to be there at a quarter after twelve — but I forget the name of the place," she suddenly added, "what is it, father?"

"The Seminary!" replied her father, as he buttoned up his coat.

"Oh, so it is — the Seminary's just the name — well, I'm ready now. Come away, father!"

Winding their way quickly along the crowded thoroughfare of Notre Dame Street and across the Place d'Armes, where the magnificent church whose fame has since spread throughout all the land, was then in progress, Cormac Riordan and his daughter entered the courtyard around which the Seminary of St. Sulpice formed three sides of a square. The green grass grew up and flourished through the interstices of the rugged pavement, and the old fabric, with its rough, unplastered walls, and small, narrow windows, and its ancient-looking clock on the front of the centre building, wore a look of reverend age and of unworldly tranquillity that refreshed the mind, when contrasted with the bustling, noisy, struggling world without. Yet the courtyard of the Seminary was not lonely, and through the door in the eastern wing, which led to the entrance hall, there was an almost incessant stream of human beings pouring in and out. The sight was altogether strange to Alice, and she whispered to her father as she

led him up the stone steps to the hall, "This must be the door, father, that we're to go in at, for I see ever so many people goin' in an' out. But, my goodness, it's the queerest place ever I seen. The house looks like a jail, only there's no iron bars on the windows."

When they found themselves fairly inside, Alice looked timidly around, not knowing what to do, and wondering why Father Smith was not to be seen. There were benches all around, and she made her father sit down. There were several persons waiting, all apparently of the poorer classes, and every eye was turned from time to time to a certain door in a corner of the hall, but not a word was spoken, and Alice employed herself in examining the place, naturally supposing that she and her father were to wait in silence as every one else did. There were three doors on one side and two on the other, and right opposite the door of entrance were two large uncurtained windows, looking out on a small grassy enclosure, surrounded by high walls. The floor was composed of large flags of stone, and the only thing that the room contained in the shape of ornament was an old painting of the crucifixion, which hung between the windows. The walls were simply whitewashed, and there was no other furniture than the benches aforesaid, and a very common writing desk, which stood on a high stand in one corner.

After a little while, a door opened on the left hand, and a little old man hobbled across the floor, clad in a sort of smock frock of coarse gray cloth. This was the porter of the Seminary, and nothing could have been more in keeping with the aspect of the place than that primitive-looking official, with his quaint, old-fashioned *tournure*, and his

homely, unpretending habiliments. No dignified, dressed-up porter would become the hall of the Sulpicians, since they themselves, with all their lordly revenues, are still and always distinguished by the greatest simplicity of dress — their garments are of coarse texture, and never change but with the seasons, for the rents of the Island of Montreal go to feed the poor and clothe the naked, and give fuel to those who would otherwise die of cold during the long Canadian winter — they go to assist in building churches and schools and colleges, not to minister to either vanity or luxury; words of which the meaning is practically unknown in the Seminary of St. Sulpice. No sooner did the old man appear than he was besieged with questions from the anxious expectants. Some asking in English, in the various accents of the Irish provinces, for priests whose names denoted them of their own nation; others spoke in French, and to their questions, more satisfactory answers were given — for the porter of the Seminary has but small affection for “the stranger’s tongue,” probably because he speaks it with difficulty, and seems to find it a relief when called upon to speak in his native tongue — the running, flowing, liquid French.

One of the first who accosted the old man was a pale, delicate woman, with a sickly-looking child in her arms. “Is Father Smith within — or could I see him, do you think?” Being answered in the affirmative, she returned to her bench. Next came an emaciated, careworn man, supporting his crippled limbs on crutches, and he, too, asked for Father Smith, who was that year the almoner of the house.

“He’ll come soon — dinner all over, I think — you wait till I see.” But he only got a step in

advance, when he was accosted in French by two men, who kept him some minutes in conversation, so that Father Smith came out before he was able to go in search of him.

"Well, father," said Alice, in a whisper, "isn't that the quarest talk that ever you heard—my goodness! I wouldn't understand a word of what they were sayin'—but there's Father Smith, I declare, an' he's beckonin' us over—come, father—this way!"

"Be so good as to stand back a little!" said the priest to those who were crowding in on him: then making a sign for Alice to come forward with her father, he told them that he had been mindful of them.

"I have been speaking to the Gray Nuns about you," said he, "and they think it would be best for Alice to be placed with some respectable seamstress for a while, so as to get a trade on her hands."

"But what would my father do, your reverence, while I'd be away from him?" said Alice, timidly; "sure he couldn't do without *me*."

"Oh, we didn't forget your father," replied the priest, with a smile of approbation, "these good nuns keep an asylum for infirm and destitute persons, and they will have pleasure in receiving your father until such times as you may be able to earn for him and yourself. His money can still lie over in the Savings Bank. What do *you* think, Cormac?"

Cormac was silent for a moment—the color deepened on his cheek, and a sort of choking sensation stopped his utterance. Alice only pressed closer to his side, and clasped his hand more tightly. At last he spoke—and he did his best to speak cheerfully—but it would not do; his voice

was broken and tremulous. "Well, sir, if *you* advise me to it, I'm willin' to take your advice. If there was any other way — but I suppose there isn't — I'd as lief not go, for there never was one o' my family that I heard of that lived on charity. But, then, if it's God's will, your reverence, an' for Alice's good, I'll go in, an' be thankful to them that'll give a shelter to the poor dark man."

Father Smith was in his turn deeply affected, and he coughed slightly, as though to cover his emotion, before he replied.

"I trust it is God's will, my poor man," he said, "and I am quite sure it is the best thing you can do. Your separation may not be long, and Alice can go often to see you, and then you may rest assured that God will requite you both for the sacrifice you make him, and for your entire resignation to His holy will. You may take your father home now, Alice, and I will see about getting you a place. To-morrow, or the next day, you can come up here again, and with God's help I shall have all settled for you."

As Alice and her father left the hall, they heard the good priest endeavoring to console the man with the crutch, whose wife, it appeared, was just dead, and he had come to seek the means of burying her, where experience made him sure of obtaining it. By that time, others of the priests were coming out, and almost every one, as he appeared, was accosted by some applicant — a few on business, but nearly all petitioning for some assistance. "Why, father," said Alice, when they were outside the door, "there's poor people here, as well as at home." "So it seems, Alice!" replied Cormac, and he heaved a deep sigh.



CHAPTER IV.

ALICE EMBARKS ON THE SEA OF LIFE.

THE following day was one of deep, deep sorrow to Alice Riordan and her father, for in the evening they were to separate — to separate for the first time. Father Smith had called about noon to announce that a certain Mrs. Dempsey would send for Alice about six o'clock; and although Cormac employed all the intervening hours in reasoning with his daughter, explaining to her the necessity which urged him to consent to such a measure, and representing to her that it was all for her own advantage, yet still Alice could not bring herself to leave her father with any sort of cheerfulness. Malone and his wife were highly indignant at the proposed change, looking upon it as a direct insult offered to themselves. It was bad enough when she heard of Alice going to serve her time to a dressmaker, but their anger knew no bounds when they found that Cormac was going to the Gray Nunnery. "There's for you, Harry Malone!" cried his gentle helpmate, who, forgetful of her sprained arm, was helping her servant girl to wash bottles and decanters, working away as though no such thing as a sprain had ever been heard of. "There's for you — there's what it is to be draw-

ing priests about the house — you see the notions they have got into their heads. Well! it's just what we deserve from them — that's all I'll say, for really I have no patience with people that puts on airs, and forgets themselves — some people are in need of a cooling, and they'll get it, or I'm much mistaken — Go on with your work, Sally! what are you gaping at? — one would think I had two heads on me."

"Well, indeed, Lizzie dear!" said her husband — "you're not much wrong this time — upon my credit, it'll be many a long day before I bother my head about any one in the same way. So say no more about it, and you may take your oath upon it that you'll never be troubled with any of my people again. Let all these good Christians stay at home in Ireland and eat potatoes and point for me."

Meanwhile Alice was sitting in another room on a low seat beside her father, her head resting on his knee, and her pretty eyes swelled with weeping. But she was listening attentively to the words that her father was speaking, and answered from time to time in a low, hesitating voice.

"You know, Alice dear!" said Cormac, "that you're jist like one goin' out on the ocean, an' gettin' into the danger of storms an' tempests. It's true you're in a good, stout ship — the holy church of Christ — an' the priests are good pilots, but the world an' the devil are very powerful, an' they'll be for drawin' you away from your religion, an' makin' you slight the advice of them that's sent by our Father in heaven to guide us home to Him. When any one tries to put proud, sinful thoughts in your head, remember what your poor old father told you, an' ever an' always bear it in mind that you're lost — lost — both body an'

soul—if you turn your back on religion. As long as you make a father of the priest, an' ask his advice when you're in any doubt or danger, then you may be sure that you'll do well, for the advice that he'll give you will be from God, an' when you follow it, you'll be doin' his holy will. Now won't you promise me to mind that, Alice?"

"Indeed I will, father—I'll be sure to do what you tell me."

"With God's help, Alice—always say 'with God's help,' for you know of ourselves we can do nothing that's good. There's one thing more that I want you to promise me afore we part,—you'll go regularly to the Catechism every Sunday, let what will come or go, an' when you have a little spare time you'll read the books that I'll ask Father Smith to buy for you."

"Well, I will, father, I will," murmured Alice through her tears, which began to fall as the hour approached when she was to leave her father, then she added quickly—"that is, with God's help. Didn't I say it right this time, father?"

"You did, *ma colleen ban!*" said Cormac tenderly, and he smoothed down his daughter's silken tresses with the hand which rested on her head, "you did—God give you grace always to *do* and *say* what's right!"

"But, father," said Alice, suddenly starting up, "what'll you do at all without me—who'll lead you about—or do any little thing for you——" She could go no farther, for the thought of her father's loneliness and his almost childish helplessness was too much for her, and she could not say another word.

"Oh! never you mind that, Alice!" rejoined her father, with an effort to speak cheerfully, but the attempt was a miserable failure, and the tears,

which he could no longer repress, now trickled down his cheek. "God will take care of me, my daughter, an' my guardian angel will conduct me when I lose the little guide that God gave me till now—He's takin' you from me for a while, Alice, but He'll lead me Himself till you come back again. Now, don't cry, Alice—don't—that's a good child—don't you see how well I'm takin' it?"

"Why, you're cryin' yourself, father," said Alice, laughing in spite of her sorrow.

"An' more shame for me if I am," replied her father, hastily wiping away his tears—"sure amn't I only givin' you into the hands of God, an' what needs I be frettin' about it, poor, foolish man that I am! Go away, Alice, an' get your little things ready, for I think it's not far from six now, an' they'll soon be comin' for you. Go, *allanna!*"

It was scarcely six o'clock when a pretty-looking young girl came for Alice, and requested her to make no delay, as they were very busy, indeed, and Mrs. Dempsey desired her to hurry back.

"I'm—I'm just ready," said Alice, making a brave effort to keep in her tears—then she crossed to her father, who was sitting at the other side of the room, and smoothing his hair with her hand, as though he were a child, she bent down and whispered in his ear—"now mind, father, I'll learn as fast as ever I can, till I get back to take care of you again,—an' I'll go as often as I can to see you."

"God bless you, Alice, God bless you!" said the blind man, with a quivering lip and a faint voice—"I didn't know the want of my sight while I had *you*, but I'll know it now. But no matter—don't be cast down about it, my own good child!—I'll be with good Christians, an' they'll take care of me for God's sake."

"But when will you go, father?"

"Well, I can't go till Father Smith comes — he said he'd either take me down to the nunnery himself or get some one else to do it. There'd be no use in askin' Harry to send any one with me, himself an' Mrs. Malone's so angry at me for goin'. But go on now, dear, you're keepin' the young woman waitin'."

"Why, yes," said the girl, "I'm all in a tremble for fear of Mrs. Dempsey being displeased. La! there's no need for so much crying, little girl — you're not going to leave your father forever — Mrs. Dempsey will let you go once in a while to see him. Come — come! I can't wait any longer — Say good-by at once and let us be off."

"Why, surely you ain't going to leave us, Alice?" cried Thompson, entering at the moment — "it's only just now I heard anything of it. By Jove! you're a great fool if you leave your snug quarters here where you might live a lady's life — odd fish! your aunt is so mad about you're going that she won't come to bid you good-by. But my eyes! what sweet little lass is this you've got here!" turning and fixing a bold look on the face of the girl now covered with smiles and blushes.

"Mrs. Dempsey sent for me," said Alice, and her father again reminded her that it was time to go.

This time Mrs. Dempsey's messenger did not second him, and her nervous dread of her absent principal seemed to have considerably diminished. Whether this was in any way connected with Thompson's rude compliment, or his admiring stare, is matter of small importance to our story, but it is certain that *malgré* the patches about his

brow and temples, and the sinister look imparted to his whole countenance by a pair of black eyes, his presence and his impudent regards seemed to have a sort of basilisk influence on the young seamstress, when he sidled up to her and asked, "Is Mrs. Dempsey always so fortunate in securing pretty faces for her establishment — has she many like you there?"

She replied with an affected toss of her head — "O dear! yes, sir, there's some of our girls *think* themselves far handsomer than I am."

"Then, really, I must buy something to have sewed—I begin to think Mrs. Dempsey is an excellent woman and deserves to be encouraged. You must take great care of our little Alice here — she'll be almost as handsome as yourself some of these days."

"Alice!" said Cormac Riordan to his daughter, "you must go at once — don't stay another minute. There, now, my child," and he slipped a half crown into her hand — "go in the name of God, an' under the protection of the Blessed Mother of Christ."

"Oh! I don't wish to hurry you too much," said the young woman, "even if Mrs. Dempsey *does* say anything, she can't eat us — she can only scold."

"Surely she wouldn't have the heart to scold *you*?" said Thompson, endeavoring to tune his voice to something like softness.

Before the girl could answer, Alice, on a whispered command from her father, took her little bundle and approached the door, so there was nothing for her but to follow, and Thompson was left to practise his modulation to the walls, for no sooner had the door closed on Alice than her father quietly groped his way into the passage, and

thence to his room, to indulge for a little while the tears of which he was ashamed.

There he was soon sought by Harry, who entering abruptly, made him first aware of his presence by a slap on the shoulder. His frank, honest nature could not retain anger, particularly when he could not help acknowledging to himself that Cormac had done him no wrong, and was, perhaps, doing what was right. "Why, what on earth makes you sit here all alone, man alive?" he cried, in his lively, bustling way — "sure, if you did send Alice away on a wild-goose chase after a trade which she might very well have done without, that's no reason you'd put yourself in jail. Come down, Cormac, come down — while we *are* in the one house, let us be good friends!" and he took him by the arm to lead him along.

"But Mrs. Malone, Harry?" asked Cormac, still holding back.

"Poh, poh — Mrs. Malone! — why, what the sorra need you care about *her*? — she'll not bite your nose off, will she? — come along, I tell you, let us have no more of such nonsense. Besides, it'll soon be supper time, and I thought I'd just come myself to fetch you, now that Alice is gone — and, by the by, I'm sorry for it — in troth I am," and his coarse voice faltered a little — "Alice is a good little girl, and what's more, she looks like them that's in dust now." This remembrance seemed to affect him more than a little, for he did not speak another word till they got to the room where his wife was busy arranging the table for tea. Cormac, too, was touched — deeply touched — and that fully as much by his brother-in-law's unexpected kindness, as by the abstract associations of his last words. But his heart was too full for speech, so he merely grasped his hand and

said, "Thank you, Harry—thank you most kindly!" and then, he, too, was silent, until Mrs. Malone's shrill voice disturbed the reflections of both, as she reprimanded her husband for not coming sooner. "It's a pretty how d'ye do, indeed, to keep people waiting this way!—it's worse you're growing every day, Harry Malone, instead of better—sit down at once and let us get the tea over."

"Is Alice gone?" was her next word.

"She is, ma'am," said Cormac in a deprecating tone—"we thought it was best for her to go at once, so long as she was going at all, as she'd be only losin' her time."

"O, indeed, Mr. Riordan! you needn't trouble yourself telling me anything about it—of course you didn't consult *me*—I'm nobody, so there's no use talking to *me*, and besides, I didn't ask only just to know whether we were to wait for her too. With all my faults, Mr. Riordan, I'm not a bit curious about other people's business. I've enough to do to mind my own. Come over, Sam! and sit down. My stars! what a man you are, to be sure; why, what's the reason you don't bless yourself?—Don't you see even Harry Malone blesses himself these last days when he's sitting down to table—what a poor thing it is to be a Protestant— isn't it, Sam?" and according to her old custom, she pointed her observation by a knowing wink of her right eye, which organ seemed to have acquired a wonderful facility in performing said act.

"There's no time one feels that, Mrs. Malone, so much as on a Friday, or on any other fast day," replied Thompson, as he thrust a huge mouthful of cold ham into the cavity for which he had designed it, and then resting his wrists against

the table, with the knife and fork sticking up erect, as though he meant to act on the defensive, "it makes me always love my religion when I find myself feasting on a good beefsteak or joint of mutton, while others around me are keeping the fast on some dried codfish or salt mackerel; it's then that I bless the memory of that jolly dog, Luther, who declared against fasting and all such tomfooleries, in the name of all sensible people who were to come after him — you and I amongst others, Mrs. Malone."

This sally was rewarded with a gracious smile, and so the matter rested. Cormac did not feel himself called upon to take it up for discussion, and for Harry it had little interest, for he never troubled himself about such things.

Meanwhile Alice walked with her companion to her new home, and by the time she arrived there she was perfectly acquainted with Mrs. Dempsey's domestic arrangements, the names and qualities of the four girls who were to be her companions, a due proportion of *good* being assigned to the narrator's self. If Alice had been better acquainted with fabulary lore, she would have considered Margaret Hanlon as taking to herself the lion's share in the distribution of the virtues of the household; but she knew nothing of the royal beast's recorded monopoly, so she innocently thought to herself — "What a good girl she must be, when she puts up with such ill treatment from the others!"

"But, dear me, Alice!" said her companion, all of a sudden, "what a nice man that Mr. Thompson is — isn't it Thompson you call him?"

"It is!"

"Well! don't you find him a very nice man?"

"Indeed I do not," said Alice bluntly — "I

think him very ugly, with his big red face — an' now he's enough to scare the crows from the corn with all the bits o' sticken' plaster he has on him, not to speak of his two black eyes."

"Poor man!" sighed Margaret, in a most sympathizing tone — "how in the world did he get himself so badly hurt?"

"Jist by his own bad tongue," returned Alice, quickly, "an' indeed if he didn't earn what he got no one ever earned a beaten'."

"Why, what did he do?"

"Do! — it wasn't what he done but what he said, I tell you! Nothing would serve him but he must be makin' game of the priests, an' goin' on sayin' everything bad about them, an' so there was one Dan Corrigan there that gave him a good thrashin' — that's the way it happened. Indeed, I couldn't bear to look at him ever since."

"O fie, Alice! ain't you ashamed to express yourself so — I suppose poor Mr. Thompson was only joking, and it was a savage thing to treat him so — why, his face is completely disfigured!"

"Jokin'!" repeated the little girl, almost angrily, "but I tell you he wasn't jokin' at all, an' even if he was, he had no business sayin' what he did about the priests — I don't blame Corrigan one bit, an' if I was the magistrate that's to try him for it, I'm sure in place of doin' anything to *him*, it's what I'd clap big Sam into jail, patches an' bruises an' all."

The dispute might have gone farther, for both parties were growing warmer and warmer as it proceeded, when Margaret suddenly laid her hand on the little girl's arm, "Hush! hush! we're near home now, and I declare there's Mrs. Dempsey looking out of the window — my stars! I'm afraid we'll catch it, for the old hare has on her very

crossest face. My goodness sake! what am I to say at all if she asks what kept us? — I'll tell you what, Alice, — do you just tell her that you had to look for some of your things, and that's what kept us — won't you now, like a dear creature?"

"Why, sure you don't want me to tell a lie?" said Alice, opening her eyes wide and looking full into the face of the now agitated girl.

"Oh, nonsense — never mind the lie! — if you knew Mrs. Dempsey as well as I do you'd tell fifty lies sooner than draw her tongue on you."

"Indeed, I would not then," returned Alice in her own artless way — "there would be no use in God givin' us a commandment not to bear false witness if we'd tell lies whenever we wanted to screen ourselves from blame."

"Well, Miss Piety!" replied Margaret, snappishly, "and pray who was it that kept me but yourself, with your crying and sobbing, and taking your leave of your father as if you were going to another world altogether. Upon my word! you take fine airs upon you, my little damsel."

This change of tactics took Alice by surprise. She knew very well that it was the girl's own fault if they had overstayed their time, and she was too little acquainted with the wiles of the world to understand the new turn things had taken, so she remained silent, and so did her companion until they reached the domicile where Mrs. Dempsey wielded her supposed despotic power. As they entered the door, and passed through a small room which was "silent all, and lonely," Margaret shook her hand in a threatening manner to her young companion, and whispered:

"Now, mind what I told you — or if you don't——"

A door flew open, and Alice stood before her

new mistress, whom she really did begin to fear. Not daring to look up, she waited in trembling anxiety for the first words of the awful personage. They were not addressed to her.

"I thought I told you to make haste back, Margaret?"

"And so I did, Mrs. Dempsey! I didn't lose a minute. The little girl wasn't quite ready, and her poor old father felt so bad about seeing her go — no, not *seeing* her, because he's blind, — but he took it so bad, and Alice here in like manner, that I couldn't bring myself to hurry her away. That's the truth, ma'am, if I was going to death, and if you don't believe *me* you can ask *her*."

"Go away to your work," was the reply, "the girls are waiting for you to put that dress together. You have always some plausible excuse when you come in, but there's no great use in my doubting your word, or taking you to task about your gadding when you go out. Go off now, and leave the little girl with me. Come here, child, don't be afraid of me. I suppose Margaret told you I was very cross — did she not?"

Alice looked up in surprise, for the voice was a soft one, and the tone was anything but severe, and one glance at Mrs. Dempsey's face was enough to reassure her, for it was a pale, careworn face, but mild and even sweet in its expression. In a minute Alice was at her side. "Why, my goodness, you're not like Mrs. Dempsey at all."

"No! — and who am I like, then, Alice? — did you ever see Mrs. Dempsey before?"

"Well, no," said Alice, somewhat confused, "but some way I thought — I thought — that——"

"That I was a very harsh, overbearing sort of woman, with a cross face and a voice like a hand-bell," said Mrs. Dempsey, laughing heartily —

“Well, never mind what any one tells you of me, Alice—you’ll know me better by and by, *The proof of the pudding’s in the eating of it*, as we used to say in Ireland. Come till I show you where to put your things.”

“And did *you* come from Ireland, too, ma’am?” asked Alice, as they went up stairs together.

“Why, to be sure I did, Alice—where else should I come from? I was born and reared on the beautiful banks of the Boyne, not far from where the great battle was fought in old times. Did you ever hear tell of the Battle of the Boyne—the Battle of Oldbridge?”

“Yes, ma’am,” said Alice, much encouraged by the easy familiarity of Mrs. Dempsey’s manner—“I often heard my father an’ uncle that’s at home talkin’ about it, an’ about King William, too, and King James that was on our side! What part of Ireland is it in, ma’am?”

“In the County Louth, Alice, not far from Drogheda—but let us go down now till I introduce you to the girls—I dare say they’re waiting for me.”

When Alice entered the room on the first floor where the girls were at work, she found them four in number, including her acquaintance, Margaret Hanlon, and they all looked so gay and so good humored that she looked forward with real pleasure to her sojourn amongst them.

“Girls!” said Mrs. Dempsey, “I’ve brought you a new hand—her name is Alice Riordan, and you will all like her the better when you hear that she is Irish and Catholic, like ourselves.”

“Catholic!” said Margaret with a laugh, while the others pressed forward to welcome Alice, “ay, *that* she is—brimful of piety, as I’m a sinner. But come over here, child, and sit beside me.

Mrs. Dempsey, I'll take her in hand, if you've no objection."

"Certainly you may, Margaret, but not to-night. Let her take this evening to get acquainted with you all. Have you all been to supper?"

"Yes, we have."

"In that case it's time for us to have ours; come, Alice, my daughter will be waiting for us."

Mrs. Dempsey took the trouble of informing Alice that she was a widow, with only one child, a daughter, of fifteen or sixteen years of age. "None of my girls board with me," said she, "as they are all outdoor apprentices, except yourself, and, indeed, only Father Smith urged me to take you, I wouldn't have consented to take any girl as an indoor apprentice, — to tell you the truth, I want to keep my Ellen as much away from the girls as I possibly can; but from what his reverence told me of you and your father, I thought I might venture on receiving you."

Ellen Dempsey just then came in, and looked somewhat abashed on first perceiving a stranger present. She was a shy, pale-faced girl, much too tall for her age, and yet her manner was so childish that she might easily have passed for being much younger than she was. "Come, come, Ellen," said her mother, "don't be ashamed — this is Alice Riordan, the little girl that Father Smith engaged for me. Give us our supper, dear, and after that you may come with us a while into the workroom, as I have to stay there myself — we're in a great hurry, finishing that dress of Mrs. Barton's, as she's going to a ball to-morrow evening, and wants the dress home early in the afternoon. Alice, sit down there beside Ellen — that will do."

Little conversation passed between the two girls, for Ellen could not at once get over her

bashful reserve, and Alice could not help drawing comparisons in her own mind between her and the lively, prattling girls in the workroom. Mrs. Dempsey was herself by no means loquacious, and on the present occasion her mind seemed to be occupied by some train of thoughts that kept her silent.

So Alice drank her tea and ate her bread and butter, and wondered whether her father missed her very much, and then looked at Mrs. Dempsey, and then at her daughter, and then at their shadows on the wall, and at last her eyes rested on a large tortoise-shell cat who sat purring and winking on a chair near Mrs. Dempsey. Alice held out her hand, and said, "Puss, puss," whereupon grimalkin looked graciously towards her, and, as if perfectly satisfied by the result of her investigation, condescended so far as to cross over under the table and mount on the back of her chair, laying a paw on her shoulder and singing her best song. Alice took her on her knee, and thus was commenced a friendship which lasted through some eventful years.

"So I see you've made *one* friend already, Alice," observed Mrs. Dempsey, with a smile, as she arose from the table. "Do you like cats?"

"I like this one of yours, ma'am, because she puts me in mind of one we had at home in my Uncle Dinny's."

Here one of the girls put in her head and asked if Mrs. Dempsey was ready to go to the workroom.

"Yes, yes, Susan, I'm just going. Ellen, wash up the tea things and give pussy some milk, then you may come down a while to help us, for the girls must be going in an hour or two, and we must put all hands to work. Come, Alice!"

In the course of the evening, Alice asked for

some work, and as it was merely the skirt of a dress that was given her, she did it neatly and well, and Mrs. Dempsey told her she was going to be a first-rate dressmaker if she went on as she had begun. Alice smiled and blushed, and replied that she had often helped a dressmaker who lived near her uncle's. "She was a cousin of mine, ma'am, an' I used to go to her very often, just to learn to sew."

"Oh, then you've got the worst over already," said Mrs. Dempsey, "and I see you make a very good offer, indeed. I only wish my Ellen was as far on, but that she'll not be for a while, unless she gives up her novel reading."

Here the girls looked at each other and laughed, and Ellen bent over her work with a blushing face. The mother went on, "I don't know how it is, I'm sure, that those books get into the house, but after all I can say they *do* come in, for just when I begin to hope that Ellen has left off reading them I'll come pop on some old second-hand volume, with a wonderful name, hid away in some secret place. Ellen knows very well that I don't wish her to read such trash, and yet she takes every opportunity of doing it, which is the more surprising to me as in other things she is very obedient."

"Oh, my goodness! Mrs. Dempsey," cried Dora Boyce, the youngest of the girls, with a merry laugh, "you can't expect Ellen to be as pious as yourself; when she's as old as you are now she'll read good books, too. I'm sure I don't see the harm there's in reading novels—they're so amusing and so interesting."

"Did you ever hear tell of certain poisons, Dora, that are very sweet and pleasant to the taste?"

"Well! I believe I did;" said Dora, "but what of that?"

"Why, it's just the same with the novels; they're all very *interesting*, as you say yourself, but they're full of deadly poison for all that. I have just taken this opportunity to speak about it, because I know very well that some of you must be carrying these books to Ellen, and I promise you, girls, if I find one more in the house, I'll make such a rout about it that you'll not venture on it again. I tell you all plainly that the first novel comes under my hands I'll burn it. So, let this be the end of such work. Go up to my drawers, Ellen, and bring down that *Monk of Udolpho* that I found last night."

Ellen went up, but the book was not there, for she had herself given it to Margaret Hanlon, of whom she had borrowed it. While she was gone, the girls sat demurely at their work, not even glancing at each other, though it was easy to see that they found it hard to keep from laughing. Ellen came back and told her mother, very gravely, that the book was not there.

"Not there!" cried Mrs. Dempsey, angrily, "why, what has taken it away? Didn't you see me lay it on the top of the bureau last night? what have you done with it?"

Ellen was silent, and her face was covered with blushes. She knew not what to say, and looked at everything but her mother's face. At last she glanced at Margaret, and the latter made a rapid gesture of admonition, then she took it on herself to answer.

"Oh! if that's the book you mean, Mrs. Dempsey, it was I that brought it here, — and I didn't intend to give it to Ellen at all, because I had got the loan of it and hadn't read it myself, —

but I forgot it on the table in the passage where we leave our bonnets, and Ellen took it up stairs just to look at it, but she didn't read it, I assure you, and yesterday she gave it back to me."

"And why not say so, Ellen, when I asked for the book?" said her mother, sternly. "O, Ellen, Ellen! are *you* learning deceit—this is even worse than I thought. Now, girls, mind what I told you about the novels—with regard to your story, Margaret, I say nothing—be it true or false—but what I said I'll do. So, if you bring them in here you know what's in store for them. As to you, Ellen, I'll talk to you at another time. Alice, you look as though you were getting sleepy, and I think it's time for us all to leave off. You can go home now, girls, but see and come early to-morrow." They promised and went away.

The first thing that Mrs. Dempsey did when they were gone was to rate her daughter severely for her disobedience and deception, explaining to her, at full length, the enormity of her double crime, and the danger of having any secret communication with the girls. "How often have I told you that there is not one of them with whom I would wish to see you associate, and yet here you are going on tampering with them in an underhand way, and borrowing of them books which I, your mother, had forbidden you even to look at. I declare before God, Ellen, that you'll break my heart if you go on so even a little longer. I want to bring you up in the love and fear of God, and you'll not let me—you'll listen sooner to the bad advice of them that are given up to the vanity and folly of this world—unhappy child that you are, and unhappy mother that I am!" The poor woman raised her handkerchief

to her eyes, and Alice could not help casting a reproachful glance on Ellen. But Ellen was far from being insensible to her mother's affliction, and in an instant she was clinging around her neck, sobbing and crying.

"Mother, dear! I'll never, never do it again — indeed, indeed, I'll not — only forgive me this once, mother, and you'll see whether I will or not. Mother! mother! don't cry that way. I'll do anything you bid me to do."

The mother was easily satisfied, and when peace was restored, she asked Alice whether *she* had ever read any novels.

"Why, indeed, I don't know, ma'am," said Alice simply, "I never heard of them before. I never read many books — only three altogether, I think. Let me see, I read *The Life of St. Patrick*, and *The Seven Champions*, an' another great book called the *Tales of the Fairies*. Oh, I forgot, I read another, *Think Well on It*. If any of *them* was a novel, ma'am, my father an' my uncle thought it no harm to read them, for I used to read them out to them all in the evenin' when they'd be sittin' around the fire. My uncle was goin' to buy me *Valentine and Orson* the next time he'd go to the market — but I came away too soon, for he didn't get into town on account of a sore leg he had. Them's all the books ever I read, ma'am."

Mrs. Dempsey smiled. "God keep you from reading anything worse, Alice! If Ellen had only your story to tell, it would be well for her and me both. But you must tel me all about your father and your uncle, and all the rest — who else had you in the house?"

"We had Catty, ma'am, an' a little boy that minded the cows."

"And who was Catty, pray?"

“Oh, she was my uncle’s housekeeper — he never had a wife.”

“Very well! some of these evenings you’ll tell me all about them. Now we’ll say our prayers and go to bed. Have you been accustomed to say the Rosary, Alice?”

“Oh, my, yes,” said Alice, “sure we used to say it every night at home.”

“Well, then, we’ll say the five glorious mysteries — come, kneel.”

So they did — then Mrs. Dempsey said the prayers for night aloud, and the two girls followed, and then there were five *pater* and *aves* offered up in honor of the five wounds of Our Lord Jesus Christ, begging him to grant them all the graces of which they stood most in need.

When all was over, Alice was shown to her bed, and the little dwelling was soon silent as the grave.





CHAPTER V.

THE CIRCULATING LIBRARY.

IT was late in the afternoon on the following day, and Mrs. Dempsey was just deprecating the approach of night with so much work still to be done, that must be done by daylight, when a liveried servant knocked at the door and told Mrs. Dempsey to be sure and send up some one in the course of an hour to take Mrs. Finlay's measure. "She says, Mrs. Dempsey! that you must have her dress done by to-morrow evening — she's to give the parcel to the girl that goes up. Now don't forget,"

"O, no fear, Thomas!" replied the dressmaker, "your mistress, of all people, must be attended to."

"Very good!" said Thomas, and hurried away.

"Margaret!" said Mrs. Dempsey, "put on your bonnet as fast as you can and go up to Mrs. Finlay's — she wants her measure taken, and you're to be there within the hour. Hurry now if ever you hurried, for she may be gone out before you get there, and you know she'd never forgive me if I disappointed her. I'll take your place there till you come back."

"I wish she was half as busy as we are!" said Margaret, poutingly, as she arose and threw her

work on the table with a discontented air, "she's a regular bore, the same Mrs. Finlay."

"Well! indeed, I'd just as soon she hadn't sent this message now when we're so hurried," replied Mrs. Dempsey, "but you needn't be long away, Margaret, if you walk fast—and make no delay that you can avoid."

"Delay, indeed!" repeated Margaret, "it's no trifling walk, I can tell you, from here to the far end of Sherbrooke Street. If I'm back in an hour it will be good walking."

The other girls looked at each other and smiled, and as Margaret passed by Dora the latter plucked her gown, which motion was answered by a significant glance.

"Poor Margaret!" said Mrs. Dempsey, "she can't bear to lose a minute when there's any hurried job in hands—I wonder she isn't rejoiced to have a walk this fine day."

Mrs. Dempsey had her eyes fixed on her work, but Alice saw the girls wink at each other, and she thought that somehow Margaret was not quite so unwilling to go as she pretended. "I'm sure there's something in it that Mrs. Dempsey doesn't see," said she to herself, but she took care not to say so.

Margaret had given herself an hour but she took nearly *two*, so that it was almost six o'clock when she got back. Contrary to her usual custom, she knocked at the outer door, whereupon Ellen ran from the kitchen, and quickly opened the door. "Have you got it?" she whispered. "Yes—yes—here it is!" replied Margaret in the same undertone. "Be off as fast as you can with it; if you let *this* be seen, mind I'll never bring you another." So she handed a small parcel to the greedy expectant, who disappeared in an instant with her prize, whatever it might be.

"Is that you, Margaret?" called out Mrs. Dempsey.

"Yes, ma'am," said Margaret as she entered the work-room. "I suppose you thought I was dead, but indeed I couldn't get back sooner, for Mrs. Finlay was engaged when I went, and she kept me waiting for a full hour or more." Then adroitly calling off attention from her protracted absence, she proceeded with a whole string of directions concerning Mrs. Finlay's dress, ending with — "It's to be sent up to-morrow at twelve o'clock to be fitted on. I'm sure," she added, throwing herself languidly into a chair — "I'm sure I hope I'll not have to go, for it's too much of a good thing." She cast a sly glance at Mrs. Dempsey, but the latter was intent on examining the materials for the dress, and for some minutes she did not answer a word. At last she said, to Margaret's apparent annoyance, but real satisfaction: "And yet I'm afraid you must go again; for I don't think Dora or Susan could fit on the dress, Mrs. Finlay is so particular."

"Oh, very well," said Margaret, affecting to put it off with a laugh, "'*gin I maun danse I wull danse*,' as the old Scotch woman said when the sexton beckoned her out of the pew. What's that you're doing, Susan — I declare I believe that's my work you have — give it here, and arrange your own — I had mine all settled before I went out." Great was the secret joy of the four girls employed by Mrs. Dempsey when on that evening she announced her intention of going to see a sick friend. "I'll not be long," said she, "and I hope, girls, you'll work while I'm away." Every one answered readily that she might depend upon them, and taking Ellen with her for company Mrs. Dempsey went to make her visit.

The instant she was gone there was a general cry of, "What did you get, Margaret?—something good, I hope."

"Here it is," said Margaret, as she drew from an inside pocket a rather small volume, bound in blue muslin. There was a rush toward the book, which Dora caught up, with a laugh of exultation, and then holding it towards the candle she read the title aloud. It was *The Castle of Otranto*—the ignoble memento of Walpole's creative genius.

"Oh, my goodness, I'm sure it *must* be beautiful!" cried Susan. "Any book that's called after a Castle is always so nice—there's so many long passages, and towers, and vaults, and secret doors, and haunted rooms, dear me! *The Castle of Otranto*—and Otranto is such a pretty name. I don't know how it is but there's no one can get as nice books in the library as you, Margaret. I never can happen on anything worth reading."

"That's because you don't tell the man what kind of a book you'd like," replied Margaret, "you go a moping about trying to find out what you want until you're glad to take anything at all to get away. But who do you think I met in the library, girls?"

Several names were mentioned, but Margaret always shook her head and laughed. "No—you're out there, guess again!" "Oh, it's no use guessing—tell us who it was?" "Well! come here!" The three girls instantly gathered around her and she said in a low whisper: "Captain Tandy! and what do you think but it was *he* that hunted up that nice book for me—it's long since he was at the library before, for it seems he was out of town these weeks past."

"Well, I'm sure, if you are not the luckiest girl," cried Maria, in a tone of real vexation,

"you're always meeting such adventures, and here *we* are — shut up in this hole of a work-room from Monday morning till Saturday night."

"Take care, Maria!" said Margaret, though she laughed as she spoke, "take care, dear! there's a hole in the roof, you know, that may let out every word. Alice! are you fond of reading?"

"Well! I am," said Alice, quietly, "when I have nothing else to do."

"And ain't you fond of stories?"

"Yes, I used to like to hear them at home telling about the fairies and such things." The girls laughed, but Margaret silenced them with a wink.

"Well, then, Dora here is going to read us a pretty story — come now, girls, let us all work hard to make up for Dora's time "

"But I hope it isn't out of them books that Mrs. Dempsey said against," said Alice, blushing at her own temerity.

"Upon *my* word!" cried one and another, "there's the little greenhorn for you! Forward enough, I declare and vow!" But Margaret instantly answered with mock seriousness: "that's a good girl, Alice! — always be careful to do what you're told: — no, my dear, *this* is *not* one of those naughty bad books. I hope you wouldn't suspect us of reading *them* after what Mrs. Dempsey said. Oh, indeed, no — this is a *very* good book! — go on, Dora dear! "

So Dora began to read, and all the girls worked away for dear life so as to make up for the lost time, and though Alice was at first rather doubtful as to the extreme excellence of the book, yet she soon became interested in the wild and thrilling narrative, and so completely did it rivet her attention that her work fell from her hand, and she sat with her eyes wide open and fixed on the

reader, until Margaret twitched her arm and told her to mind her work if she wished to hear the story. Alice started, and blushed deeply.

"Indeed, I forgot all about the work, but I'll work as fast as I can if you'll only go on; my goodness, I never did hear such a beautiful story!"

Unfortunately for Alice's newly-awakened curiosity, Mrs. Dempsey knocked at the door and the book was instantly thrust into Margaret's pocket, with a whispered injunction to Alice to say nothing about it. "Our reading was no loss to Mrs. Dempsey," said Margaret in an undertone, "for we've worked so as to make up for the little while Dora read."

Mrs. Dempsey appeared in low spirits, and did not inquire as to what work had been done, but simply telling her daughter to go and iron some things that had been washed in the morning, she took the waist of a dress and sat down in silence. The girls were all silent, too, and scarcely a word was spoken until Mrs. Dempsey raised her head and asked to see what Alice was doing.

"Very well, indeed," said she, after a hasty inspection, "you make a very good beginning, I met Father Smith at my cousin's, and he was asking for you. He told me he would go to-morrow to see your father. He's gone from your uncle's — isn't he?"

"O, yes, ma'am," said Alice, stirred into animation by the mention of her father, "he was to go to the Nunnery this morning. I'm very glad to hear that Father Smith is goin' to see him — he'll be so lonely!" And Alice sighed deeply, as she bent over her work.

Soon after the girls went away, and it chanced that Mrs. Dempsey went up stairs for a moment.

"Alice," whispered Ellen, "what were you all doing while we were gone?"

"Why, we were at work, to be sure."

"Were you *all* at your work?"

"All, only Dora — she was readin' for us."

"She was, eh? — and what was she reading?"

"Oh, it was a most beautiful book — a great story about an enchanted helmet, an' a man in a picture that used to come down from the wall an' walk about — I don't remember the name, but it's the nicest story ever I heard."

"Well, now, Alice," said Ellen, in her low whispering voice, "you're not to tell my mother on any account that Dora was reading. Do you understand?"

"Why, what harm was it for her to read — we all worked very hard, as Margaret told us, so as to have as much work done as if Dora had helped us. Sure your mother wouldn't be angry for us listenin' to such a nice story as that?"

"I tell you she *would* be angry — she's very unreasonable sometimes." Alice stared at the speaker in downright wonder. "Ah! you may look at me, but mind what I tell you — if we find you telling tales on us it will be worse for you!"

Her mother's foot was on the stairs, so she stopped short and shook her finger at Alice. The latter was so surprised that she could scarcely collect her thoughts sufficiently to answer some question that Mrs. Dempsey put to her.

"Why, Alice, what are you thinking of? I suppose your thoughts are far away."

"Yes — no, ma'am," stammered Alice. "I'm not thinkin' about anything."

"Well! you looked as if you were," said Mrs. Dempsey, laughing. "You must take care of falling into *brown studies* — they're very bad for

young people. Be cheerful and gay, children, while you can, for the world will soon bring you sorrow and sadness. I love to see young people happy, but somehow I can't get Ellen persuaded to take my advice. She's always pining and fretting and looking as careworn as though she had a weight of years on her back and of sorrow on her heart. I hope you'll not catch the infection, Alice, — you must keep up your spirits even for your father's sake, so that you may cheer him up in the dark evening of his life."

Alice made no answer, but she looked at Mrs. Dempsey with her eyes full of tears, and there was a glow on her cheek that the excellent woman well understood.

"You're a good girl, Alice," said she, in a softened voice. "May the Lord keep you pure and undefiled as you now are. I'm quite sure that you'll be a comfort to your father."

"God grant that I may, ma'am!" was the fervent response of Alice, as she arose and went to assist Ellen to fold and damp some clothes for next day's ironing.

Next day Mrs. Dempsey went out early in the forenoon on some important business, and she was scarcely gone when Ellen stepped softly in with a book in her hand: "She's gone at last," said she.

"I'm sure I thought she'd never get on her things, she was so long about it. Margaret, I don't like this book you've brought me half as well as the last. It's as dull as can be."

"Why, what is it?" said Susan.

"Oh! it's the Anti — anti — a — n — ti — qua, *The Antiquary*, or something like that."

"What is it about?" demanded Margaret.

"They told me it was a capital thing."

"What is it about?" responded Ellen, "why,

it's about a tiresome old man that used to be gathering up trink-em-traps, and talking about them to everybody that would listen to him — and, only think, there's an old beggar-man in it — a big lazy old fellow with a blue gown on him. Such stuff!"

"Well!" said Margaret, in a tone of apology, "I'm sure I wasn't to know what was in it — I took it because they all told me it was a first-rate story."

"Yes! but mightn't the name be enough for you?" said Ellen, tartly. "What sense is there in such a name as that — you might know at once that it was all a heap of nonsense — if you had brought me *The Sorrows of Werter*, that you're so long promising me — how well you got something good for yourself! — here you've thrown away my four coppers for this foolish Anti — anti humbug! I don't believe it's a novel at all — and that's the truth for you!"

"Novel!" cried Alice, as that ominous word struck upon her ear, "why you would not read a *novel* after what your mother said, would you, Ellen?"

"Now! see what you've done!" said Margaret, exultingly, though in an under tone, but Ellen after a momentary pause turned short on Alice. "Is it I? Oh! not for the world — now that mother has set her face so much against them. But she didn't forbid *me*, or any of us to read nice story-books." Here the other girls put their handkerchiefs to their mouths, pretending to cough, and Alice was fain to look down on her work and say nothing, for she felt somewhat abashed.

"Now, Alice," said Margaret, "don't you want to hear the remainder of that pretty story Dora was reading last night?"

"Yes," replied Alice, quickly, "I'd like to know what happened to that beautiful Matilda — but why don't you read it when Mrs. Dempsey's here?"

"Oh, mother doesn't care for stories," said Ellen, with a low laugh, for she never laughed or spoke aloud. "Margaret, won't you lend me this book that Alice finds so pretty when you've got through with it yourselves?"

"What's to hinder you from waiting now to hear Dora read?"

"Oh, nonsense! where would be the use — when I didn't hear the beginning — will you exchange?"

"No, I don't want that one you have, when you say it is such trash, but I'll take it, and get you another to-morrow. Will that do?"

"I suppose it must do, but remember — you're either to bring *The Sorrows of Werter*, or else *Charlotte Temple* — or if they haven't them, you could get me the first volume of *Clarissa Harlowe*."

"But where do you get all the books?" inquired Alice, abruptly — "do you buy them or what?"

"Buy them!" cried Margaret, with her loud, ringing laugh. "Why, no, you silly child, we get them at the library."

"The library — what's that? — I never heard of it before."

Another roar followed at Alice's expense, and Margaret could scarcely speak for laughing as she answered. "Oh! it's a place — a place where they keep books to lend out on hire. Do you see?"

"Oh! I know," said Alice, though she did *not* know what it meant, but she wanted to get out

of the conversation, because she saw they were all laughing at her simplicity.

Ellen then returned to the kitchen to see after her mother's dinner, which she had left on the fire, and Dora went on with *The Castle of Otranto*, while her auditors swallowed its marvels — horror and all — with all the greedy attention of youth. To them the rich, quaint humor and the graphic delineations, and all the varied charms of Scott's narratives would have been but nonsense, while they hung entranced on the supernatural wonders, and exaggerated pictures of *The Castle of Otranto* — and would that it was the worst that issues from the circulating library, for then the reading of novels and romances would be only loss of time — at least comparatively little positive evil — but when we consider the vile, the lewd, the filthy trash to be found in hundreds of volumes in these libraries — when we think of the voluminous works of Sue, and of Reynolds, and of Sand — which no Christian should ever even open — we shrink with horror from the very mention of a circulating library, which to our mind is synonymous with a wholesale warehouse of poison for the soul, a lazaret-house reeking with corruption — the stench of impurity, and irreligion, and unbelief. Yet such was the place which those poor, thoughtless girls most frequented, and its precious contents formed their chief amusement — the cherished beguilers of their leisure hours — Sunday as well as week days,

Alice had got into a bad school, and what was worse she was too young and too innocent to guard against the danger. Already she began to feel the contagious effects of the atmosphere in which she moved — its baleful influence began

already to undermine the purity and rectitude in which she had been brought up. And what wonder that it should be so? From the moment Mrs. Dempsey quitted the room till her presence again drove the evil spirit back into his den in the warm, uncircumcised heart, that work-room was the theatre where deceit, and envy, and detraction, and all the vanity of vanities were in turns practised — taught — and learned. If at times the better nature of any of the girls broke through and prompted some kindly word for the absent — the slandered — or if any one ventured on a serious remark of any kind there was such a laugh raised at her expense that she was very glad to retract what she had said, or otherwise remain silent. Yet all this was unknown to Mrs. Dempsey, who was really a God-fearing and exemplary woman. She, indeed, suspected that the girls, and especially Margaret, were far from being the companions she would have chosen for her daughter, and hence her efforts to keep her out of the work-room, but she had no idea — could have no idea — of how corrupt they really were. In truth they had the art to appear modest and docile in her presence, only permitting themselves just as much license as gave an air of *semblance* to their respective parts. Such then was the school into which Alice Riordan had been introduced, — Father Smith knowing nothing of her companions, but having full confidence in Mrs. Dempsey, whose worth he had long known. Alas! in such cases, there is more to be looked to, than the character of the employer, for it is a melancholy fact that virtue or vice — good example or bad example, is likely to be imbibed from those of our own age, with whom our thoughts, and feelings, and tastes are more closely

allied. Moreover, where several young persons are shut up together all the day in a small room, while their employer is frequently absent, they necessarily inhale each other's vices or virtues as they do the pent-up air of the place. It was a fearful danger, then, into which Alice was thrown, and had it not been for her religious training she was lost beyond redemption. Even as it was, her young heart lost for the time its beautiful freshness, and she wondered at herself, without at all understanding the cause, when she found that in order to hear the remainder of the story she could consent to deceive Mrs. Dempsey. Not that she was ever under the necessity of telling a positive falsehood, for Mrs. Dempsey never thought of putting a direct question to her on the subject, but still she made use of prevarications, suggested by the wily Margaret, which amounted to the same thing.

But Sunday came at last, and Alice went to Mass with Mrs. Dempsey and Ellen. The dinner was always early on Sunday, and when it was over, Alice set out with a bounding heart for the Gray Nunnery. When she had inquired her way to the gate, she stood and looked up at the inscription, of which she could make nothing, and was turning away with a disappointed air, when a lady who was about to enter observed her embarrassment, and asked what was the matter with her.

"I'm lookin' for the Gray Nunnery, ma'am, and they told me this was the place, but that isn't the name that's up there over the gate."

"Yes, it is, my little girl," replied the lady, with a benevolent smile, "that inscription means *The General Hospital of the Gray Nuns*, but it is in French, which accounts for your not understanding it. But do you want to see any of the Nuns?"

"No, ma'am — it's my father I want to see; he hasn't his eyesight, an' so Father Smith got him in here till I'd be able to earn for him."

The lady smiled again at the artless communicativeness of the little girl. But she took her kindly by the hand: "Come with me, then, and I will introduce you."

"Thank you kindly, ma'am," said Alice, with her lowest courtesy.

So she followed the lady up a long, semi-circular walk, fringed with tall trees on one side, and they entered a door in the side of the building. Alice then found herself in a long hall, having a range of windows on either side. She looked up and down with wondering eyes, for as far as her sight could reach she saw only snow-white walls, and brown doors, and clear, shining windows. Through the inner windows she saw a spacious apartment with double rows of nice clean-looking beds, hung with check curtains, and many old men were moving about on the painted floor. The room was full of light, having windows on either side, and Alice thought as she peeped in — "why, if my father is in there, it's a very nice place — nicer, than my uncle's, with all the fine things that are there."

Just then the lady returned and with her was one of the nuns, a large, motherly-looking woman in the gray stuff dress which gives its name to the order, with a stiff black veil arranged so as to shade, without hiding the face. As they came up the passage together the lady whispered to the nun, which she answered with a smile and an approving nod.

"So you want to see your father, my child?" said Sister Carroll, stooping to caress the little girl. "I think you'll find him well contented."

Would you like to have him come out, or perhaps you'd rather go in and see the room where he lodges."

"If you please, ma'am," said Alice, timidly, "I'd rather he'd come out — I'd be ashamed of so many strangers bein' to the fore." Then Alice was taken to the parlor — a large, square room without other ornament than its extreme cleanliness — its white walls, and painted benches, and a few rare plants which grew and flourished in boxes in the one window which the room contained. There was a back door, too, the half of which was glass, and it looked out on the garden, with its sanded walks and summer verdure. Oh! there was a clock, too, and Alice fixed her eye on the dial-plate, and began to count the minutes, but scarcely had *one* glided by when the door was opened and her father groped his way in having been conducted so far by a lame man, with a dead arm.

"Are you here, Alice," said Cormac softly. There was no answer, but in an instant a small soft hand was laid in his, and a deep, low sob reached his ear, and he knew that his child was again before him. But Alice could not speak till her first emotion was past — the mingled joy and sorrow that flooded her soul. She led her father to a seat, and sat down beside him, holding his hand as tightly as though she would never let it loose again.

"Why don't you speak, Alice?" said her father, as she wiped away a trickling tear — "don't you know your voice is the light of my heart, an' I'm in darkness when I don't hear it?"

"Well I'm so overjoyed to see you again, father," said Alice, in a broken voice, — "an' some way I'm sorry, too, — I don't know what's the matter with me at all. I'm sure I thought the days as long as weeks since I left you."

"I know that, my daughter — I know it well enough, God bless your lovin' heart — but tell me — how do you like your place — what sort o' people are they in it?"

"I can't complain of the place at all, father, an' for the people, why I like them well enough, for all they are not a bit like the people at home. Mrs. Dempsey is a widow woman with one daughter — Ellen they call her, that's two or three years older than I am, an' there's four other girls that comes in to work, out-door 'prentices they call *them*, an' I'm an' in-door 'prentice — isn't that funny? Sure I thought it was only boys that were called that."

"An' what sort of a woman is Mrs. Dempsey?" inquired Cormac, anxiously. "Is she a good, religious woman?"

"Indeed, then, she is, father, very pious all out. Every night we say the Rosary as we used to do at home, an' Mrs. Dempsey reads us beautiful things about saints, an' about our Lord and the Blessed Virgin — that's at night when all the girls are gone home — an' besides she goes to communion every fortnight."

"Very good — very good!" said her father, in a more cheerful tone, "that takes a load off my mind. An' how do you like the girls?"

"Oh! I like them very well — I'd be twice as lonesome only for them, for they bring nice story books, an' one of them always reads for us."

"An' does Mrs. Dempsey allow them to spend their time that way?"

"Oh! my goodness, no, father! it's only when she's out — sure she wouldn't let us read at all, if she knew it — but if you were to hear the beautiful stories — why, I declare, you'd never tire of listenin' to them."

"Ay! ay!" ejaculated Cormac, "I'm afeard there's something wrong there. Don't you know, Alice, that the time spent in that way belongs to your mistress; so none of you has any right to employ it only as she tells you. An' another thing, it looks very bad for this readin' to go on whenever her back's turned an' she knowin' nothin' of it. Very bad, Alice, very bad, indeed," and he shook his head.

"Well, but, father, we all work harder than we would do while the readin' is goin' on, an' they all say that Mrs. Dempsey doesn't lose a minute of our time by it."

"Don't b'lieve them, Alice — don't b'lieve them, *ma colleen dhas* — every minute of your time when Mrs. Dempsey's away ought to be spent at your work, an' as for workin' harder then, so as to make time for readin', that shows that Mrs. Dempsey's to be hoodwinked. If people act right, Alice, they'll not be afeard of their actions bein' seen or known, an' when they want to hide them, it's a sure sign that they're doin' what's not right. What kind of books do they read?"

"Oh! the nicest books that ever was, father!" said Alice, warmly, "it's only one that I heard as yet, an' it was *The Castle of Otranto*."

"The Castle of what?"

"Of Otranto, father!"

"I never heard tell of that before," said Cormac, musingly, "so I don't know anything about it — but listen hither — the first time you see Father Smith just tell him about this readin', an' tell him the names of the books that you heard the girls talkin' of, an' he'll tell you whether they're good or not. An' until you hear what he'll say, I'd advise you not to listen to them only as little as you can, for I'm afeard of them — I am, indeed."

"Well, father, I'll do what you tell me," said Alice, submissively, "but before I go, I want to ask you how you like to be here. Would you rather be here than at my uncle's?"

"Oh! indeed, then, I would, Alice!" replied her father, with alacrity, "leavin' the little bit o' pride an' old decency out of the question," and he smiled mournfully, "I'd far rather be here. You see here we've the good bit an' sup, and we're well taken care of in every respect; and what's best of all, we're put in the way of servin' God with all our hearts, an' savin' our own souls, for we have no care on us of any kind — we live in peace and quietness — an' we have a chapel here in the house where we hear mass every day in the week, an' any time we choose we help each other to go in there, an' we can sit an' meditate as long as we please, in the presence of our God, an' in the silence of his holy house. I declare to you, Alice, dear, it's a heaven on earth — an' isn't God good an' kind to provide poor helpless creatures like us with such a home — thanks and praise be to Him forever!"

Here a bell rang, and Cormac said to his daughter, "That's for Vespers, Alice — do you think you can stay — do if you can, for there's Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament after Vespers, an' then there's such beautiful singin'."

"Oh! I got leave to stay as long as I like, father," said Alice, "an' I'd like to go to Vespers here, for Mrs. Dempsey was telling me about the beautiful church that the Gray Nuns have. Give me your hand, father dear," — and when she got it, she pressed it between both her own, in the joy of being able to lead her father once more, though but for a few brief moments.

"Where's the church, father?" inquired Alice, when they got into the hall.

“Just turn to the right, an’ you’ll see all our old men, an’ everybody else goin’ in at a big door — that’s the church. They were tellin’ me in the room how Vespers an’ Benediction were to be in the afternoon, an’ I was watchin’ all day for the time to come. Now, when you go in, you’ll see a high stone pot or something of the kind just before you, with the holy water — of coorse, I can’t see it, but I know by the feel of it that it’s stone — so you’ll lead me up to it.”

“Oh, to be sure, father — whenever I go into a chapel, I always look around first to see where the holy water is, for I don’t feel as if I was fit to go any farther till I get some — but here’s the door — I see the nuns goin’ in now — my goodness, there’s so many of them — an’ dear me, father, there’s ever so many little girls — some as big as me, an’ some little bits of things — an’ them walkin’ two by two. Well, now, isn’t that nice — they all look so well, with clean caps on them, an’ frocks, an’ pelerines — an’ their cheeks as red as roses. Who are they, father — are *they* nuns, too?”

“Whisht, dear, whisht,” said her father, in a low, earnest whisper, “them’s the orphans — there’s near a hundred of them, they tell me. Let us stand back a little.”

“Why, father,” said Alice again, after a short pause, “there’s a lot of old women, too.”

“To be sure there is — there’s one big room full of old, sickly, infirm women — just the same as ours — they say — there’s a home here, my child, for old and young — men and women — that are not able to do for themselves — an’ a good home it is, too. May the Lord reward them that keeps the shelter over us all!”

“Well, dear me, what a big house it must be!” said Alice, “but now they’re all gone in. Come!”

Alice had never seen so pretty a church as that of the Gray Nunnery, with the glittering glory of its high altar, and the beauty of its paintings, and the two *chapelles* on either hand—one of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the other of the Immaculate Conception, and the shaded light from many windows, and the numerous tapers on the altar. But most beautiful of all was the rapt devotion of the holy sisterhood, and the subdued expression on the rosy faces of the children, and the quiet attention with which the old of both sexes assisted at the divine office. In a small gallery on either side, opposite the two *chapelles*, were the invalids who could not make the journey down stairs. And then the psalms which form the Vesper service were chanted so sweetly, and the Benediction which followed was so impressive that Alice thought she could have remained there forever, and was really sorry when the priest withdrew from the sanctuary and the attendant nun proceeded to extinguish the lights that had illumined the sacred enclosure.

When her father and she left the church, both were still full of the delightful emotions they had felt while in the church, and Alice said that, with God's help, she would come to Vespers there every Sunday.

"An' with Mrs. Dempsey's leave, Alice!" added her father.

"Oh! to be sure, father—you know I wouldn't come unless she'd give me leave—but I know she won't hinder me."

"Well! now it's time for you to go home, my daughter," said Cormac, when Alice had conducted him to the door at which she saw the old men going in. "I'll be lookin' out for you next Sunday again, and may God bless you till then."

Mind what I told you about doing only what Mrs. Dempsey bids you."

"I will, father — good-by now — there — you're in now — good-by till I see you again," and squeezing his hand she walked slowly down the hall, wiping away a tear as she went.

Next day, being Monday, Mrs. Dempsey was again obliged to go out on business, and she was scarcely gone when Ellen was called into the work-room to see the book which Margaret got on Saturday evening at the library.

"What is it," cried one and another, "what have you got this time?"

"Oh! one that Captain Tandy picked out for me," said she, with an air of great importance.

"Why, did you meet him again?" asked Ellen, in a tone of chagrin.

"Yes, and he took the trouble of choosing my book for me; he said it was a most interesting book, and, indeed, *I* think so too, from what I read of it yesterday, while father and mother were at grand mass."

"Well! but that isn't telling us what it is."

"Oh! the name of it is *The Monk*; but let some one begin to read. I think it's Susan's turn now. But where are *you* going, Alice?" observing that she was about to leave the room.

"Oh! I'm just going up stairs with my work."

"Well, but then you'll lose the story; don't go now."

"I don't want to hear the story," said Alice, with a slight blush, "perhaps it's just one of them novels that Mrs. Dempsey forbid us to read."

"Well! I declare, if that a'n't rich!" exclaimed Margaret, while the others laughed heartily, and made various gestures of contempt. "I suppose we've got a little priest in petticoats here. Very

well, Miss Prim! you can go if you choose, since you're so desperately afraid of novels."

And well for Alice that she did go; well for her that she heard not even the smallest portion of that book read, else had her pure heart been foully tainted, and the beautiful bloom of her innocence withered — forever and ever — never again could she have regained the morning freshness of "life's pure spring" after hearing or reading that iniquitous — that loathsome effervescence of a diabolical soul. Happy was it for Alice Riordan that she had received her father's advice on the previous day, and still happier for her that she had the courage and the firmness to act it out, notwithstanding the jeers and sarcasm of her companions. This was her first victory over open temptation, and it was, as is generally the case, the forerunner of many others, for the building is almost sure to go on well when the first foundations are well laid.





CHAPTER VI.

————— Never yet
Could sinner to his sin a period set.
When did th' offender, since the birth of time,
Retire, contented with a single crime?
JUVENAL. (Gifford's Translation.)

JUST about the time when Mrs. Dempsey was expected to return, Ellen went up stairs and asked Alice, in a very civil way, to come down to the work-room, "for," said she, "if mother finds you up here with your work she'll be sure to ask the reason, and I know you wouldn't like to tell tales. So you had better come down before she comes in."

Alice bundled up her work in a minute, and went down accordingly. By this time the book was put away, and not a word was spoken about it, but the burning glow on the faces of the girls, their abstracted air, and unusual silence, told all too truly that its poison was already at work in their hearts and souls. As for Alice, she understood nothing of this, nor troubled herself about what was passing in the minds of her companions, for she was thinking of the beautiful chapel in the Gray Nunnery, and the lovely face of the Virgin Mother in the picture of the Immaculate Conception, and the sweet, soft voices of the nuns as they sang the praises of God and

His goodness to men. Good God! what a contrast was there—while the minds of the other girls was submerged in the stagnant pool of iniquity, and filled with the hateful images conjured up by the fatal art of the romancer—images which kindled the blush of shame on the cheek while they pursued their internal work of defiling and corrupting the heart: Alice, on the contrary, was equally engrossed with thoughts and visions of purity and peace. Visions in which her beloved father, and the dear friends far away in her own dear home, were the *dramatis personæ*. Oh! fearful is the effect of novel and romance reading on the young, unformed mind—wresting it away from the fresh, and smiling, and pure creations of life's early day, and fixing it with basilisk attraction on the unreal and delusive, and often impure images emanating from a morbid and diseased imagination, making it familiar betimes with the follies and vices, and intrigues of what is called the world.

"I hope," said Margaret, "you'll not tell that we were reading, Alice?"

"No, indeed," replied Alice, "you may be sure I'll not, except Mrs. Dempsey was to ask me."

"Oh! but even if she did—surely you wouldn't be so mean as to be a story-carrier."

Alice had no time to answer, for at that moment Mrs. Dempsey opened the door, and walked in. She laid a large bundle on the table and then sat down, panting for breath. "Dear me! I'm so tired!" she exclaimed—"I've carried *that* all the way from the top of De Fleury Street. Ellen!" she called out to her daughter, who instantly appeared with a face as demure as possible, "Ellen, is the dinner ready?"

"Not quite, mother, but I'm hurrying with it

as fast as I can — I've been nearly all the time since you went out, puffing and blowing at that fire, and I can't get it to light up — to look at it now, you'd think I was only just putting on the wood — I declare I've got a bad headache by it."

"Well! well!" said the unsuspecting mother, "you must only go and do the best you can with it — and *do* hurry, like a good girl, for I feel somewhat faint after my long walk." Away went Ellen, after exchanging a sly look with Dora, who sat next the door.

In the afternoon there came a knock to the door, and who should come in but Father Smith. Mrs. Dempsey would have taken him into her little parlor, but he chose rather to go into the work-room, saying in an undertone, "No, no, Mrs. Dempsey! I'll just go in here with your leave — I want to see how our little Alice Riordan is getting on."

The girls all rose, and made their best courtesies as the priest entered, and Alice made one step forward, fearing lest he might not see her. But her smiling face was the very first object on which Father Smith's eye fell, and after saluting the others in a general way, he went over to Alice and laid his hand on her head:

"Well, my little friend! and how do *you* do? I think Mrs. Dempsey is very kind to you, for you look quite happy and contented. I hope you do not feel lonely here?"

"Oh, no, sir — not a bit!" said Alice, looking up from under the priest's hand — "there's so many youngsters here that it's a very pleasant place. If it wasn't for — for — my father, your reverence, I'd be well contented — but when I think of him I get to be lonesome."

"But you went to see him yesterday — did you not?"

"Oh, yes, sir, an' it's what I was goin' to tell your reverence that I'll not be a frettin' about him now half as much as I was."

"And why so, Alice?"

"Why, he's so well off, your reverence, an' seems to be so well contented. He says, sir, that he never was better satisfied in all his life — an' so well he may, for it's a beautiful place all out, an' there's such great care taken of the old, sickly people. I was just thinkin' here this mornin', your reverence, that if my father could only *see*, he might be as happy there as the day's long, for they have a chapel inside of the nunnery, sir, that's just like heaven — if *he* could only see it."

The priest said nothing to this, but he stroked down the smooth, fair tresses of the little girl, and turned to Mrs. Dempsey with a smile of kindly meaning.

"Mrs. Dempsey!" said Father Smith, "have you got any books here that would suit our young charge — she is very intelligent for her age, and we must do our utmost to cultivate the excellent disposition which she seems to have — a soul so pure must be guarded with all care — yes, even as the apple of our eye, Mrs. Dempsey." As he spoke, he glanced around on the other girls, to whom he had yet scarcely spoken.

"Yes, sir," replied Mrs. Dempsey, "I've got *The Imitation of Christ* — and the *Life of Christ*, and the *History of the Old and New Testament*, and Gobinet's *Instructions for Youth*. Will any of them *do*, sir?"

"Certainly — they are all excellent, and I think you had better give her *The Life of Christ* to begin with. *The Imitation* might be a little too

ascetic for one so young, though, in fact, it is so full of sweetness that any one—old or young—who is rightly disposed, must read it with pleasure.” He paused a moment, then addressed himself again to Mrs. Dempsey.

“Good books, Mrs. Dempsey, are the greatest blessing that can be given to the young, as *bad* ones are the greatest curse. I know my little ward here has never been contaminated by reading anything dangerous to faith or morals, and I depend on you to see that she is preserved from such studies. I hope, nay, I am quite sure—that you do not allow novels or romances to be read in your house?”

“Well, sir, I do my best to keep them out, for I know very well the danger that’s in them, but I’m very much afraid that some of my girls *do* manage to read them still. And what’s worst of all, sir, I’ve found them bringing them to my daughter, though they knew very well that I didn’t allow her to read such. I’m well pleased, Father Smith, to have this opportunity of explaining the whole matter to you before their faces, for I find that *I* can make nothing of them.”

“Why, is it possible?” asked the priest slowly, and then he looked at each girl successively.

“Yet you are all Catholics — at least I think so.”

“Yes, they are, sir,” said Mrs. Dempsey.

“Ay—they may call themselves so, but their condemnation shall be all the greater, if they persist in such a course. Catholics are more rigorously judged than others, if they do not follow the lights held out to them! Alice! have *you* seen any books with these girls that Mrs. Dempsey did not know of?”

Alice blushed deeply, and hung down her head, but she was silent.

“Answer me!” said the priest, gravely. “Do not be afraid — it is your duty to do so.”

She raised her head and looked askance at her companions. She saw them overwhelmed with confusion, and their eyes fixed on her with an expression that she well understood. She looked at the priest, and the tears stood in her eyes.

“Oh! your reverence — don’t ask me, don’t — I’m sure they didn’t think it any harm. I wouldn’t for anything, sir, they’d get blame by me.”

“They shall not get blame, my child,” said the priest mildly — “it is for their own welfare that I seek this information, and they cannot be angry with you for merely answering my question — here in their own presence. Answer me, then, have you seen any books here unknown to Mrs. Dempsey?”

“Well, I did, sir!”

“How many?”

“I only heard *one* read, sir.”

“One, eh? — and what was the name?”

“It was called *The Castle of Otranto*, your reverence.”

“Humph! — *The Castle of Otranto*! — very good. Did you see any more?”

Alice was silent again — she looked around, and she saw Margaret holding up her clasped hands to her, in mute entreaty, while the others were in evident trepidation.

“O! what will I do at all!” muttered Alice to herself, but the priest heard her. “Tell me,” said he somewhat sternly — “tell me quickly.”

“There was one here this morning, sir,” murmured Alice.

“And what was it?”

“Oh! for pity’s sake — don’t!” whispered Susan, who stood next her

What was it? " repeated the priest.

"Ha!" cried Mrs. Dempsey. "You needn't ask her—here it is!" and stooping under the table, right in front of Margaret, she picked up the book, which had fallen, unperceived, to the floor, when Margaret thought to have put it in her pocket.

Father Smith took the book; the girls covered their faces with their hands. Mrs. Dempsey ran to the kitchen, and drew Ellen in by the arm in silence—after glancing at the name, and the author's name—on the title-page, the florid countenance of the priest assumed a crimson hue—then he turned pale and drew a long breath. Then he handed the volume to Mrs. Dempsey, saying in a subdued voice, "Mrs. Dempsey, the instant I am gone, you will put that accursed book into the fire, and watch it till its leaves are utterly consumed, for every leaf, every page contains deadly poison. Mrs. Dempsey, I have been a priest of God's church for many years, and am tolerably conversant with human wickedness—it has often been my lot to witness scenes of revolting vice, but such a shock as this I have never before sustained. Surely some demon in human form must have given this book to these unhappy girls—for myself I have never read a page of its contents—nor would not, for the wealth of worlds—but by reputation I know it well—know it for one of the most filthy productions that ever issued from the press of any country. I tell you, ma'am, that *that* book is sufficient to damn millions of souls, and I doubt not in the least but it may already have done so."

"May the Lord have mercy on us, Father Smith! is it in earnest you are?" cried Mrs. Dempsey, her eyes dilated with horror and her lips quivering.

"In earnest!" replied the priest, solemnly, "how could I be otherwise than in earnest where the salvation of souls is at stake? Tell me — poor, misguided young creatures!" he suddenly added, turning a pitying look on the girls, some of whom were now crying and sobbing, "Tell me — where did you get the book?"

"It was Margaret Hanlon that got it in the library, sir," said Susan, with a sobbing voice.

"The library, eh? — so you take books from a circulating library. And did you choose this precious volume yourself, my good girl?"

"N — no, sir — it was a person that was standing by that picked it out for me."

"And who was 'the person,' if I may make free to ask?"

"It was a very respectable person — an acquaintance of ours, sir." The priest looked at her a moment, and her eyes sank to the ground, for she felt that he was reading her very soul, and that it would not bear inspection.

"Well! young woman," said he at length, "all I shall now say is this — that I would advise you to beware of that 'respectable person' whoever he may be. It was not for nothing that he put such a book into your hand, and if you do not take care — you may fall into a pit dug by his hands, some of these fine days. Now, girls!" he said, addressing them all together — "now, girls! listen to what I am about to tell you — it is a mortal sin to read that book — or any such book, being a positive violation of that divine precept which prohibits all impurity — any one, therefore, who reads or listens to a book of this class is guilty of a heinous sin, and exposes themselves to innumerable other sins."

"Thanks be to God, then, that I didn't listen to it!" ejaculated Alice.

“Oh! you did not hear it, then?”

“Oh! no, your reverence, indeed, I did not, for my father told me not to listen to any more readin’ without Mrs. Dempsey’s knowledge, so I took my work up stairs while it was goin’ on.”

“You did very well, Alice,” said the priest, “and now as a mark of my entire approbation, I shall give you this medal of the Immaculate Conception; which you are to wear around your neck, and every day you will say the prayer which is inscribed upon it: — ‘Oh! Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!’ Say it lovingly and trustingly, my child, and Mary, that Mother most pure, will obtain for you the gift of purity, whereby you may imitate her spotless and holy life.” He then gave her a small silver medal, telling her to put it on as soon as possible.

Alice made a low courtesy, and said “Thank you kindly, your reverence, I’ll put it on my neck this very evenin’, as soon as I can get a ribbon.”

“And now, girls,” said Father Smith, “may I not hope that, after what I have told you, there shall be an end to this novel reading — will you not promise me that you will give up your visits to the library, and that you will take the advice of your worthy mistress, and if you do read at all, read what is good and profitable to you?”

“Indeed, I will, sir — I’ll promise that with my heart!” said Susan fervently — “to tell your reverence the truth, I was ashamed while I was listening to that book, and I know very well that it’s a horrid bad one. I’ve made up my mind, sir, while you was talking to us, and with God’s help, I’ll never read a novel again.”

“God bless you, child — God bless you!” said the priest — “your resolution is a good one if you

only have the grace to keep it. But pray for it, and you'll have it — *ask and you shall receive*, as our Lord himself tells us. Well, now, Mrs. Dempsey, I must go, and I trust I'll hear a better account of your young people next time I come. If so, I'll bring them books that they'll find full as amusing and far more profitable than *The Castle of Otranto* — though I do not consider it at all so dangerous as some others of the class. But after all, as a great saint says in his writings, speaking of another evil propensity of youth — after all, the very best of them is good for nothing, while the general run of them are of the most poisonous nature. God bless you all!”

Mrs. Dempsey accompanied the priest to the door, and as he bade her “good morning,” he charged her to look sharp after those girls — “that Margaret especially. I fear she is not to be trusted. So you must be on your guard, and keep your daughter and Alice out of her way as much as you possibly can.”

“I'll do all I can, sir,” said Mrs. Dempsey, with a sigh, for she was thinking of the many tricks in which she had found Ellen out, and she feared that Margaret's lessons and example had taken fearful effect.

“Now, girls!” said the dressmaker, as she entered the work-room — “what do you think of your novel reading after that?”

Every one was in earnest in promising not to read them any more, but none was louder than Margaret, who went beyond all the others in her vehement condemnation of the “bad book that had been palmed upon her” — “but she'd take good care that they didn't do it again — that she would.”

“And you, Ellen,” said her mother, “I trust this will be a lesson to you for your whole life —

you heard what Father Smith said about *this* book," for she had the condemned volume still in her hand.

"Yes, I did, mother," replied Ellen quickly, "and I hope I'll never forget it." Here she caught a glance from Margaret, the meaning of which she well knew, and she went on, in her softest tone. "But won't you let Margaret take back the book to the library, ma'am?"

"Certainly not, Ellen! — certainly not! — did you not hear the priest tell me to burn it the instant he was gone — its sentence is, therefore, pronounced, and I'm just going to put it into execution."

"But, mother dear, what will Margaret do — you know the book isn't hers, and she must give it back to the owner."

"No," said Mrs. Dempsey, "of two evils we must choose the least — this book shall never pollute another soul. It is far better that its owner should sustain its loss than that it should continue to spread deadly infection amongst God's creatures. Come along to the kitchen, Ellen! and you'll see what a blaze we'll have. God bless my soul! it will be a blaze of hell fire, enkindled by iniquity."

Margaret looked daggers, but she dared not speak. She muttered something about "being *up* to the people that brought all this on her; she'd make them rue it, or she'd know for what," and then she darted an angry glance on Alice, who, quite unconscious of the coming storm, was occupied only with the skirt she was gathering.

Alas! she little thought that there was no more peace for her, at least in the work-room. It never occurred to her that her companions might possibly blame her, for she had given her testimony so

unwillingly, and as it had in fact been forced from her, she had no idea that any one could be angry with her for merely obeying the priest. But she knew not those with whom she had to deal.

Next morning, when Mrs. Dempsey went up stairs, Margaret said to Alice, "When are you going to see your aunt? I saw your favorite, Mr. Thompson, yesterday evening, and we were talking about you."

"Mr. Thompson is no favorite of mine, Margaret," replied Alice, sharply, "an' I told you that before. I don't know when I'm goin' to see my aunt, for I've to ask my father about it."

"Dear me!" said Margaret, "what airs we take upon us. I'm sure both you and your father are as ungrateful as can be, for Mr. Thompson told me all about how you treated your uncle and aunt. I think you ought to be ashamed to look either of them in the face — that's my notion."

Alice blushed to the very temples, and her eyes filled with tears: "Well, indeed, Margaret, it's not fair for you to say that; I'm sure nobody ever said before that my father was ungrateful, an' it's grieved I am to hear any one speak so of *him*. An' for our bein' ashamed in regard of my uncle or aunt, we're not a bit ashamed, for we only done what my father thought it right to do, an' he wouldn't do anything only what was right. Indeed, I didn't expect to hear you speakin' that way. We're not ungrateful, Margaret, but very thankful to both my uncle an' aunt; an' so we ought, for they were very good to us."

"Oh, yes, talk's cheap," said Margaret, with a toss of her head, "we all know that."

"Well! God knows our hearts," replied Alice, making a strong effort to keep in her tears, "an' when He does, neither my father nor myself cares

much for what Mr. Thompson or any one else says of us."

"Oh! of course you don't!" cried Margaret, her face covered with an angry flush, "common people like us needn't think to rub skirts with them that get silver medals for carrying stories — of course not — that would be too great condescension on their part to mind anything we say."

Poor Alice was fairly silenced by this unexpected sally, and she could no longer restrain her tears, but put up her apron to her eyes and sobbed aloud.

"God forgive you, Margaret," said Susan, as she approached Alice, and put her arms round her neck, "you know very well that Alice couldn't help telling what she did, and it's very wrong of you to speak so."

"It's none of your business, Susan," retorted Margaret, as she turned sharply on this new opponent. "I suppose you want to curry favor, for fear she'd tell on yourself; but it won't do, your only chance is to leave nothing in her power."

"And so I mean to do, with God's assistance," replied Susan, firmly. "I at least, mean to keep my promise, and I hope for the future to do only what I'll not be afraid of any one knowing."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Margaret, and her mocking laugh was echoed by the others. "Very good, indeed. So Susan's a-going to be Alice the Second. Ha! ha! ha! But hush! hush! mum's the word — here's Mrs. Dempsey."

Instantly all was silence, and every eye was on the work before it; but Mrs. Dempsey soon saw that something was wrong. She looked slowly around the room till she came to Alice, and there her glance rested. "Why, what in the world ails you, Alice?" she suddenly asked.

"Oh, nothing, ma'am; nothing at all," and she tried to force a smile, but it would not do—the smile refused to come, and the tears came because she did not want them.

"Nothing," repeated the dressmaker, as she looked round the room, and this time her eye rested on Margaret, whose face bore evident marks of confusion. Mrs. Dempsey turned away with a heavy sigh, and she shook her head doubtfully. "Ah! Alice! Alice! your tears and your tell-tale face belie your words; but I suppose I may as well let the matter drop. Counsel and command are alike lost on some people; may the Lord grant them the graces of which they stand in need. Show me your work, Margaret. I wish, my good girl, you'd mind *it* when I'm absent, and nothing else. You'd find it far more to your profit, I can tell you."

"So I do mind my work, Mrs. Dempsey," said Margaret, in a pert tone.

"Well! well! let it pass—there is no use in talking."

A few days after this occurrence, Margaret and Susan, whose homes were in the same neighborhood, were passing along the street together, and Margaret proposed that they should stop at the library.

"What to do there?"

"Why, to get a book, to be sure."

"Well! Margaret, do you mean to say that you go there still, and take books out of it, after all that the priest said?"

"Indeed, then, I do," was the laughing reply; "I wouldn't leave off reading novels if the pope himself forbid me, instead of a common priest. Old birds are not caught with chaff, you know, so Father Smith was only wasting his breath when

he talked to *me* about it. Will you come in, or will you not?"

"I will not," said Susan coldly, and she walked on.

"Go on, then, and I'll be after you in a minute," and so saying, Margaret dived into the dingy-looking shop which formed the local habitation of the library.

But Margaret did not overtake Susan, and the latter was quietly seated at her work when Margaret opened the door and fluttered into the room, all panting and breathless.

"What kept you so long, Margaret?" inquired Mrs. Dempsey.

"Oh! my mother was out when I got home, and there was no sign of dinner, so I had to go to work and cook something for myself."

Susan stole a look at the face of the speaker, and she thought it had never looked so plain. "She has such a *cattish* look in her eyes," said she to herself, "and no wonder, when she's thumping out such a lie as that. It would be hard for her to look well."

"Margaret," said Mrs. Dempsey, as she caught a sight of her flushed features, "Margaret! I'm very much afraid you are not telling me the truth."

"Well! if you don't choose to take my word for it, I can't help you," replied the saucy girl, "do you want me to swear it to you?"

"I want you, at least, to treat me with proper respect," said Mrs. Dempsey, her pale cheek assuming a hectic glow, "even if you choose to tell me a falsehood; there's no need for your speaking in such a tone as that,"

"Oh! as to that, Mrs. Dempsey, I wouldn't let my own mother accuse me of telling a lie, and

it's hard to say I'd bear it from you or any one else."

"Oh, fie! Margaret! fie!" cried Susan, while even Dora and Maria held up their hands in amazement. Mrs. Dempsey bit her lip, and the color deepened more and more on her cheek; but for a moment she said nothing. When she did speak, her voice was low and husky. "Let her alone, girls; let her alone. Margaret Hanlon, tell me the truth for once; were you not at the library since you left here?"

"Even if I had been," returned Margaret, sullenly, "it would be no affair of yours."

Mrs. Dempsey arose without saying a word, and walked into the passage where on a table lay the bonnets and cloaks of the girls. She returned in a moment with a book in her hand; it was the second volume of *The Monk*!

"Now, girls!" said she, "I suspected that this unhappy girl might have been procuring another of these vile books, and I have accordingly found it thrust into a dark corner, beside where she hung her bonnet and shawl. When I tell you that this book is the second part of that horrible work which I burned yesterday, at the priest's bidding, you will not wonder at what I now do, since I do it for the preservation of my own child, and you who are placed for a time under my care. Margaret Hanlon! I find that you are not to be trusted, and that God alone can change your heart; you are, therefore, an occasion of scandal and of danger to these young girls; leave down that work, put on your bonnet, and go home."

"Home, Mrs. Dempsey! You don't mean to turn me out?" cried Margaret, turning very pale.

"Most assuredly I do; there is corruption in your very look! get up instantly and leave my

house. It is a poor one, blessed be the Lord for all things! but it shall never harbor any one who openly despises the teachers whom God has set over us to guide us on our pilgrimage."

"Oh! don't be afraid, ma'am," exclaimed Margaret, with mock respect, "I *will* go instantly, and very glad I am to get shut of your paltry business. It was the low day with me when I began it, and it's just in good time I'm getting rid of it. Give me that book!"

"No, it must follow its leader!"

"If you dare to burn it, it shall be worse for you; good Christian as you are!"

"You can only make me pay for the two volumes," said Mrs. Dempsey, "and that I'm willing to do. I'll call myself at the library."

"Can't I say good-by to Ellen before I go, ma'am?" asked Margaret, with assumed mildness.

"No — not on any account."

"Oh! very well, ma'am — very well, indeed — I hope you'll find Ellen a dutiful daughter when I'm gone — I wouldn't for the world suspect her of being anything else — ha! ha! ha! — good-by, girls — good-by, Miss Prim! I may thank you for this — I'm much obliged to you, indeed — give my love to your old blind father when you see him, and tell him to *look sharp* after his dainty daughter!"

And with this savage jest she flounced out of the room, Mrs. Dempsey following to the door lest Ellen might come out. But Margaret stopped in the passage and called in to the kitchen, "Good-by, Ellen! your mother has turned me off for reading novels — take care of yourself — good-by!"

Ellen rushed out with a face of astonishment,

but her mother took her by the shoulder, and without saying a single word, put her back into the kitchen and closed the door.

When Mrs. Dempsey returned to her usual place in the work-room, Dora and Maria began simultaneously to condemn Margaret's conduct, but they were speedily silenced by Mrs. Dempsey.

"Never have a hard word on the absent, girls! I have done what I was bound to do in regard to Margaret; but now that she's gone there must be no more talking about her errors. If she does wrong, it is all the worse for herself; but we must not commit sin on her account; let us rather try to amend our own lives, and learn to do better for the future, since we have only our own sins to account for." Then raising her voice she called out to Ellen to bring the *Life of the Blessed Virgin* and read aloud for half an hour or so.

When she read the first chapter, her mother told her to close the book and go with her up stairs, where she wanted something done. No sooner had they left the room than Dora let her work fall on her knee.

"Well, after all," said she, "I think Mrs. Dempsey mightn't have taken Margaret so short; her fault wasn't such a very great one; just staying a little too long when she went to dinner."

"Now, Dora," said Susan in reply, "you know very well that it wasn't for that she was turned away. She often stayed far longer, and ourselves in like manner, and Mrs. Dempsey would scarce say an angry word to us. It was for her disobedience, and going on reading novels after she had heard the priest saying so much against them. For my part, I think Mrs. Dempsey couldn't do less than she did, and I know that Margaret richly deserved what she got, for I heard her telling a

barefaced lie, when she was checked for staying so long."

"Why, how was that?" asked Dora, whereupon Susan told what had passed between her and Margaret concerning the library, and then both Dora and Maria acknowledged that it was really too bad, though they still seemed to think that Mrs. Dempsey had been too severe.

"What do *you* think, Alice?" said Susan, turning with a smile to Alice. "I suppose *you're* nothing sorry for what has happened — eh?"

"Well, indeed, I am sorry," replied Alice, "I'm sorry to see any one doin' what's wrong, an' though I knew well enough that Margaret was in the wrong, somehow I was grieved to see her sent away, and spoken to that way before us all. I'd have given a good deal to be out of the way, for I thought it must make her feel far worse for us to hear what was said to her. Oh! then, indeed, I could cry for her this very minute."

"You're a good girl, Alice!" said Susan, warmly, and then the conversation dropped, for Mrs. Dempsey came in.





CHAPTER VII.

Duty, like a strict preceptor,
Sometimes frowns, or seems to frown.
Choose her thistle for the sceptre,
While thy brow youth's roses crown.—

WORDSWORTH.

IT was about a week after Margaret's dismissal that Mrs. Dempsey one evening told Alice to get ready to go with her to Mr. Finlay's, as it was nearly dark, and she shrank from going alone, particularly as her way lay through a lonesome and deserted tract of ground which bordered on Sherbrooke Street, — scarcely a street at all, having but a very few houses on either side, and they fearfully "far between."

When they reached Mrs. Finlay's beautiful villa they were shown into a parlor, where they had to wait a full hour before the lady made her appearance, for it happened that she had some visitors in the drawing-room. Poor Mrs. Dempsey! how nervously anxious she began to feel as she thought how many things might go wrong at home — she whispered her fears to Alice and then was silent, for it would have been high treason for a dressmaker *en attendant* to carry on a conversation in such a place. She looked wistfully at the glittering annuals on the table, but she would not have touched one of them for the world wide, lest some malicious sprite should

carry the news of her audacity to the lady of the mansion.

“With what a leaden and retarding weight
Does expectation load the wings of time.”

So said or sung the elegant Mason long before Mrs. Dempsey's time, and though she had never heard of him or his aphorism, yet some such thought was just passing through her mind, when a light foot was heard on the stairs, and the parlor door was quickly opened by a small, youthful-looking woman dressed with punctilious care, yet without a particle of ostentation. Neatness personified was Mrs. Finlay, and Alice thought she had never seen anything so pretty as she was with her fairy figure, and girlish face, and soft blue eyes.

“I'm sorry you've had to wait so long, Mrs. Dempsey, but I could not get away sooner, and even now I had to leave Mr. Finlay to entertain my company till I return. Have you brought your bill as I told you to do?”

“Yes, ma'am!—here it is—and I've brought the pattern of a new tippet, just to see whether you'll like it or not.”

A shade came over Mrs. Finlay's brow, and her cheek was slightly flushed as she replied, “I don't think I shall take time to look at it. There is your money, Mrs. Dempsey—fifteen shillings and sixpence.”

“Thank you, ma'am,” said Mrs. Dempsey, as she put the money in her empty purse—“when am I to send up for the things you were speaking of?”

“You need not send, Mrs. Dempsey.” She paused—took up a volume off the table—opened it, and shut it again, without looking

into it. "I don't think I shall have that dress made now."

"Oh! very well, ma'am," said the dressmaker, "I'm just as well pleased, for we're very much hurried just now."

"Oh! yes, I know," said Mrs. Finlay, catching up the word. "You've turned off one of your girls — have you not?"

"Well, I did, ma'am, but I didn't think *you* knew anything about it."

"Ah! I wish it was only I that knew of it," replied the lady, and the cloud gathered on her fair brow. "But Mr. Finlay has heard of it, too Mrs. Dempsey."

"Well, ma'am, suppose he has — I hope neither he nor you blames me for it."

"Certainly we do, Mrs. Dempsey — even I have nothing to offer in your behalf, and as for Mr. Finlay, he thinks your conduct altogether unjustifiable — so much so that he has actually forbidden me to give you any more work."

"Why, God bless me, Mrs. Finlay!" exclaimed the dressmaker with a look of blank dismay. "You surely are only jesting — why, I couldn't have kept the girl any longer unless I wanted to have my own daughter and my other girls completely spoiled. Surely if you're in earnest, neither you nor Mr. Finlay can have heard the real cause of my sending her away."

"Oh! we know it very well — you turned her off because she had gone to our Methodist meeting one Sunday evening."

"Oh! now I know my way!" cried Mrs. Dempsey. "I see what's at the bottom of all this. Might I make free to ask, ma'am, who it was that told you this story?"

"Of course you may — it was the girl herself."

"Well! Mrs. Finlay, I'll not undertake to tell my own story, but here's one that knows it as well as I do. Alice, stand up and tell this lady why it was that I turned Margaret off."

Alice blushed deeply, and she felt as though her tongue would scarcely utter a word in the presence of a "real lady," but she stood up as she was bid, and after a preliminary stammer or two, got fairly into her subject, and told how Margaret had continued to deceive Mrs. Dempsey and to disobey both her and the priest, giving a detailed account of how Mrs. Dempsey had found her out in a barefaced lie, and finally turned her away, chiefly for fear of her contaminating the others.

"Now, ma'am," said Mrs. Dempsey, when she had concluded — "if you have still any doubts on your mind, you can drive down yourself to my little place, and examine the girls, and they'll tell you just the same thing."

"No, no, Mrs. Dempsey — not at all," replied Mrs. Finlay slowly, and still looking at Alice. "I have never found you out in a falsehood, and I am altogether mistaken if your little girl there is not incapable of deceiving any one — but, tell me, did you ever know this girl Margaret to go to our meeting?"

"Well! yes, ma'am; I must confess that she did — more than once, I believe."

"And you reproved her for it?"

"I certainly did, Mrs. Finlay! because we Catholics cannot join in worship with any other religious persuasion, and I felt it my duty to let her know that she had done wrong, and committed a great sin."

"A great sin, Mrs. Dempsey?"

"Certainly, ma'am — a great sin, because she knew very well she was forbidden to do it, and

besides she was exposing herself to temptation. I did reprove her for it, Mrs. Finlay! and more shame for me if I didn't, as she was under my care, and her parents are both extremely ignorant, and give themselves little trouble about such things."

"Oh! they are ignorant—are they?—well! you can go now, Mrs. Dempsey, and I regret, exceedingly, that you should have committed yourself so far, you who had so many Protestant customers. I must try to soften Mr. Finlay somewhat in your behalf, though I dare not give you any great hope of my succeeding. For my part, I do not care much what any one's religion is—I always rate people by their good or bad qualities—not by their religion, but it is not so with Mr. Finlay. He really cannot bear Papists about him, and it was a particular favor that he allowed me to employ you, but now he is so exasperated against you that he will scarcely suffer me to mention your name. But tell me—how long have you had this girl?—what is her name?"

"Alice Riordan, ma'am. I've only had her a few weeks."

"Has she any friends?"

"Yes, her father—but he is not able to do anything either for himself or her, for he is stone blind."

"And how does he manage to live?—has he any means?"

"Father Smith got him into the Gray Nunnery, ma'am."

"Oh, indeed!—is the little girl bound apprentice to you, Mrs. Dempsey?"

"Well, she's not regularly bound, ma'am—but it's all the same. She was at the business for a short time in Ireland, so that she has a good idea

of it already, and then she's very anxious to learn her trade, so as to be able to do something for her father."

"Very well, Mrs. Dempsey, that will do now — I'll try what I can do with Mr. Finlay, for I don't like to break with you if I can at all avoid it. I shall call some day when I'm in town, and let you know the result." She then put a quarter-dollar into Alice's hand, telling her to buy a little book for it — "not a novel, though," — she added with a smile that well became her — a smile as sweet as her own face.

Alice made a low courtesy, and murmured her thanks, then hastened after Mrs. Dempsey, who was moving towards the door. When they had reached the street she showed Mrs. Finlay's gift, and repeated what she had said.

"God bless her!" said Mrs. Dempsey, fervently. "God bless her every day she rises, for it's herself that has the good, kind heart. It's a thousand pities that she's a Protestant — she only wants the true faith to be everything I could wish her."

"Well, please God, Mrs. Dempsey, she'll have *it* too, for we'll begin an' pray for her; an' God will be sure to hear our prayers when she's so good — an' don't you remember she said she wasn't very black again Catholics."

"Oh! I knew that long ago," was the reply, "but indeed, child, you've put a good notion into my head — let us hurry ourselves, Alice, for it's getting to be late, and we have a lonely road before us. Here, take hold of my arm, or you'll scarce be able to keep up with me."

The remainder of the way was passed in silence, for Mrs. Dempsey was thinking with a saddened heart of the good customer she had lost — then, her thoughts naturally wandered to her who had

so maliciously and so cunningly misrepresented her, and it was with some difficulty that she succeeded in forgiving her. At last she did, and according to a peculiar habit of her own, she said aloud: "I do forgive her, and may God forgive her, poor, unfortunate creature that she is!"

"Ma'am?" said Alice, thinking she had spoken to her, for she had not rightly heard the words — "were you speakin' to me, Mrs. Dempsey?"

"No, Alice — no!" They had reached their own domicile, and, Mrs. Dempsey opening the door with a latch-key, they found Ellen dozing before the kitchen stove — pussy fast asleep on her lap, and the girls all gone.

Ellen started up as her mother laid her hand on her shoulder — "Dear me, mother! if you didn't frighten me. Why, how long you did stay! Did you meet Mrs. Harley's man on your way?"

"No — was he here?"

"Yes, he came for his mistress' dress — it seems she's very angry with you about something or another, and wants the dress to give it to another. She's taking a person into the house to sew."

Mrs. Dempsey sat down, pale as ashes, and for a moment she said not a word. At last she raised her head: "Alice, as sure as I'm a living woman this is more of Margaret's work, for Mrs. Harley is a great Bible woman all out — when my lady tried her hand with Mrs. Finlay, or rather with Mr. Finlay, and found herself getting on so well, she thought she'd go farther still."

"Why, mother, what *do* you mean?" cried Ellen in utter amazement; and having heard her mother's account of what has passed at Mrs. Finlay's. "Oh! I know it all now," said she, clapping her hands together.

"What do you know, Ellen?"

"Why, this long and many a day, since Margaret used to tell us in the work-room that she'd a great deal rather go to a Protestant church than to a Catholic one, for that all the people there were well dressed, and that Protestants hadn't to be going to confession, or fasting, or any such nonsense. She said there was a lady who promised her every sort of fine dress if she'd go to her meeting, and that she would go, as soon as ever she'd leave here."

"My God! what an unhappy girl!" exclaimed Mrs. Dempsey, raising her tearful eyes to heaven — "so young and yet so far gone in iniquity! How thankful I am that she is really gone from amongst us, though I now see plainly that she is determined to do me all the harm she can."

Alas! poor Mrs. Dempsey! though Margaret was gone, she had left her trail behind, and the expected loss of work was but the smallest and least important part of the mischief she had wrought, and was still working. She had obtained a powerful influence over the ductile mind of Ellen Dempsey, an influence of which she was fully aware, and well knew how to maintain it. She had long since discovered that Ellen was exceedingly fond of fine clothes, and she had herself inspired her with a love of novels and romances — both of which propensities had been daily and hourly acquiring strength, under the secret tuition of Margaret, until they had become real passions — the predominant passions of the soul.

It was the evening that followed the visit to Mrs. Finlay's, and the gray summer twilight was fast changing into night. The girls were just gone, and Ellen reminded her mother of some little job she had promised to do up stairs. Mrs. Dempsey took a candle and went up, telling Alice

to sweep the work-room, and put it to rights. She had scarcely reached the top, when Ellen softly opened the front door, and entered into a whispered conversation with some one outside. Hearing the voices at the door Alice felt curious to see who was there, and peeping through the window, she saw Margaret Hanlon, whom she recognized by her bonnet and shawl, for her back was turned towards the window. Alice was strongly tempted to run up stairs and apprise Mrs. Dempsey, but then she had a nervous apprehension of "telling tales," and shrank from becoming an informer. Undoubtedly it was her duty to do so, as the case then stood, and so her conscience told her, but she could not bring herself to do it. Neither did she choose to listen to what was going on between the two girls, so she went on with her sweeping, though her hand trembled and her heart throbbed audibly against her bosom.

In a few minutes the door was closed, and Ellen came in to help Alice with her work, looking as innocent as though a guileful thought had never entered her mind. "What a beautiful evening it is! the moon is just rising — how I should like to have a walk now, if mother would only let us go — but there's not much danger of that, she keeps us moping in here all the time, just as if we were nuns. I've been looking up at the moon for the last ten minutes, wishing that I was a lady and could do as I liked,"

"And talking to Margaret," said Alice, with a laugh. "I suppose you thought I didn't know her?"

"Margaret!" repeated Ellen, blushing like scarlet, "why, what put that in your head?"

"Why, my own eyes, to be sure — didn't I see her through the window?"

"Nonsense, child!" said Ellen, sharply. "You saw the old washerwoman next door, that stopped a minute to speak to me as she passed."

"Now, there's no use in talkin' that way, Ellen, it was no washerwoman I saw — but Margaret's four bones. I have my sight, thank God, as well as another."

"Well — well, I was only trying you out for it," rejoined Ellen, quickly — "it *was* Margaret — she came for a song book that I had of hers. But don't tell mother for your life and soul."

"If I don't," returned Alice, "it's because I don't wish to be a story carrier, or to bring blame on any one, for indeed I ought to let your mother know, an' I'm not doin' what's right when I keep it from her."

Mrs. Dempsey just then came in, and as the room was swept and dusted, they all adjourned to the kitchen, where Mrs. Dempsey read a chapter of Gobinet's Instructions, and then the Rosary was said. Alice did not forget her promise of praying for Mrs. Finlay, for as soon as the night prayers were ended, she offered a *pater* and *ave* expressly for her, that she might be brought to the true faith.

Next day Mrs. Dempsey came down stairs with an angry countenance and a book in her hand, and Ellen trembled from head to foot, as she glanced at it, for it was *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, which Margaret had given her on the previous night.

"So, Ellen, you're reading novels still — here I found this stuffed into your straw tick. God look down on me this day, unhappy mother that I am! — where did you get this book?"

"Where did I get it, ma'am?" stammered Ellen, trying to gain time to form an excuse. "Oh! that's been lying there a long, long time — indeed, I forgot all about it."

"Somehow, I don't believe you," said her mother.

Alice was called and interrogated, but she knew nothing of it, neither did any of the other girls, who were all sent back to the work-room, Mrs. Dempsey sat down on a chair. "Now, Ellen," said she, in a tone that made her daughter quail — it was so solemn — "Now, Ellen, there was some one talking with you at the door last night when I was up stairs — tell me who it was, for I'm almost sure it was then you got that book."

"Talking to me at the door, ma'am!" said Ellen, with a faltering voice and a burning cheek, "why, there was no one talking to me but Alice."

Alice was summoned once more. "Alice, were you standing at the door with Ellen last night while I was up stairs?"

"Is it I, ma'am," said Alice, paying no attention to Ellen's signals, "indeed, then I was not. I never left the work-room till you came down yourself. Did Ellen say I was at the door with her?"

"She's just after telling me so," said Mrs. Dempsey, fixing her reproachful eyes on Ellen's changing countenance.

"Well! after that," said Alice, holding up her hands — she was just going to add — "she may say anything!" but she restrained herself, and quietly repeated, "I wasn't at the door at all, ma'am, an' Ellen knows it as well as I do."

"Who *was* there, then, if you *were not* — for I know very well there was some one?"

Alice blushed — looked down — then looked up — but not at Mrs. Dempsey. Her ingenuity was severely tried to frame an answer, for she could not tell a lie, and yet wished to screen Ellen.

"You know I wasn't there, ma'am," she said at last, "to see who it was."

Mrs. Dempsey saw the struggle going on in Alice's mind, and her first thought was to command her to tell the whole truth, but as she said to herself, "what good would it do me — I know very well who was there, and there is no use in making bad blood between the two by forcing Alice to tell." Aloud she said, "Well, you may go to your work, Alice — stay here, Ellen, I've a crow to pluck with *you*."

She then took her to task about keeping up an intercourse with Margaret, whose real character was now so evident. "Even if her company wasn't so dangerous," said Mrs. Dempsey, "still you're giving yourself a habit of deceiving *me* — your mother — and of all vices, *deceit* is the most fatal for young or old to practise, because it will grow upon them until they can neither do nor say anything fair or above board. Now, look at that little girl, Alice Riordan; see how straightforward and sincere she is; it never comes into her head to tell a lie; everything she does and says is as open as the day, and the consequence is, that her mind is always in peace, for she has no secrets that she fears to have known. When once she's forbidden to do a thing, and told that it's wrong, she'll not do it; whether the person that forbid her is absent or present. Why don't *you* act in that way?"

"Oh! indeed," said Ellen, with a contemptuous curl on her lip, "Alice is a great pattern to set before me, when *you're* keeping her here for charity. I'm sure I don't know where she picked up so much goodness, leading her blind father about till the nuns took *him* in for charity. You could easily give me a model that there would be some credit in imitating."

"Ellen," exclaimed her mother, "how dare you

talk to me in such a tone? I tell you that with all your romantic notions, you might safely follow the example of that simple little girl, for she has really more good sense than you have, not to speak of her piety and humility. Shame upon you, girl! I'm afraid that unhappy Margaret has tainted you more deeply than I thought. God help me! what am I to do with you at all?" and the tears poured down her worn cheeks as she raised her eyes to heaven.

Ellen either was, or affected to be, very much moved, and throwing her arms around her mother's neck, she assured her she would be more obedient for the future, and give up all intercourse with Margaret. Mrs. Dempsey would not seem to doubt the honesty of her professions, so then and there took place an entire reconciliation. Mrs. Dempsey was to take *The Mysteries of Udolpho* to the library next day, and it was to be the last, the very last, of its kind that should bless the eyes of Ellen. Alas! whether the resolution was sincerely taken or not, there is no guaranty for the *keeping* of such, unless religion be at their base. We know that the road leading to perdition is paved with good resolutions, and the next day's light effaced the evanescent purpose from Ellen's mind. But not so with her newly-awakened envy of Alice — a feeling which grew and flourished in her soul, and was destined to bear unholy fruit for many a day to come.

For two or three days after this occurrence everything went on smoothly; at least to all outward appearance, though Ellen had been telling the girls in the work-room that it was Alice who had told her mother about her having the book. Susan had given a hint of this to Alice, who was so angry that she made up her mind to acquaint

Mrs. Dempsey of all that she knew of the affair. She had got as far as the kitchen, on her way to Mrs. Dempsey's room; Ellen was not there, having gone out on an errand for her mother. "Well," said Alice to herself, "this is the first time that ever I told a story on any one of my own accord, an' before I do it, isn't it better for me to think a minnit. My Uncle Dinny used to say, 'Think twice an' speak once'—now what am I going to do? To tell Mrs. Dempsey about Margaret bein' with Ellen the other night, an' about Ellen's blamin' me in the wrong, an' tattlin' to the girls; an' isn't it for revenge I'm doin' it, because I'm angry with her? why, my goodness, the priest always says that the like of that's a sin; well, I'll say a *Hail Mary* at any rate before I go." So she did say the Hail Mary, and by the time it was ended, she got up and went back into the work-room.

"Well! did you go, Alice?" said one. "Did you tell?" said another, and the girls were all laughing. "No!" said Alice. "No!" repeated Maria, taking the word out of her mouth. "No, she didn't; she just went as far as the stair-foot, then she stopped short, mused awhile, and down she popped on her knees, and when she got up, back she came, just as she went."

"No, Maria, not just as I went, beggin' your pardon—I've got rid of an evil spirit since I went out, for I prayed to the Blessed Virgin, an' she asked God to make me more charitable, and He did." Maria and Dora laughed louder than before, but Susan drew Alice down on the bench beside her, and told her she was a good girl. "I wish I could do the same, Alice, whenever I am tempted, but somehow I don't ever think of praying till it's too late. But, with God's help, I'll try to do better for the time to come."

This trial over, Alice felt quite happy. She imagined how pleased her father would be when she told him how she had acted, and the prospect of his approbation enhanced the pleasure arising from a good act. At other times she could scarcely keep up a show of civility towards Ellen, but now, with the additional grace which her victory over herself had won for her, she could be more than civil — even kind and cordial. Matters were not long thus, however, for that very evening Mrs. Dempsey came into the work-room and asked Alice if she had seen a quarter-dollar that had been lying all the morning on a shelf in the kitchen.

“I didn’t see it at all, ma’am,” said Alice.

“Why, really, it’s very strange: Ellen hasn’t taken it; she knows nothing of it.”

“Well, ma’am, neither do I.”

“Now, Alice, how can you say so?” cried Ellen, in her low, oily tones, as she stood a little behind her mother, “there’s no one for it but you and I, you know, and I’m very sure I didn’t take it, for I didn’t know it was there till mother asked for it.”

“Let it be ever so strange,” said Alice, her cheek burning with anger, “let it be ever so strange, I tell you I never laid an eye on it.”

“I wouldn’t mind it so much,” said Mrs. Dempsey, “only I really want the money just now.”

“Oh! if that’s the case, ma’am,” said Alice, “here’s my fifteen pence; you can have it with all the veins of my heart.”

“Didn’t I tell you,” cried Ellen, exultingly, “didn’t I tell you she had it; where would *she* get a fifteen pence?”

“Silence,” said her mother, sternly. “This

money was given to Alice in my presence, by Mrs. Finlay." Ellen looked quite disconcerted. "Well! I believe I *will* take the loan of your treasure, Alice," turning to her, "to-morrow I expect some money, and I'll pay you then."

As Alice ran up stairs to fetch her money, she heard Ellen say to her mother, "You know very well that she must have taken that fifteen pence."

"No, Ellen," replied Mrs. Dempsey, "whatever became of it, Alice didn't take it; I see that plainly. And, indeed, I'd as soon suspect the priest of taking it, for there's nothing but honesty in her."

"Dear me!" muttered Ellen, "what a high opinion you have of her—I wish she mayn't spoil it all some of these days!"

"No fear of that, Ellen, while she continues in the fear and love of God, as I hope she always will. I tell you again that I wish you'd imitate her in her simplicity and love of truth—in her humility and obedience—then I'd begin to hope for your temporal and eternal welfare."

Before Ellen got out her angry retort, Alice came back, and quietly putting the money into Mrs. Dempsey's hand, withdrew to the work-room. The tears were bursting from her eyes, and she feared to speak, lest Mrs. Dempsey might see her emotion, for she knew it would only raise another strife between the mother and daughter.

All that evening Alice was silent and dejected—the sweet smile which usually brightened her mild features was not once seen, and even at the Rosary her voice was low and mournful. When about to kneel, she found herself next to Ellen, and suddenly starting up she went over and knelt close beside Mrs. Dempsey. The next moment she was sorry for having given way to her resentment, and raised her eyes to Ellen's face with a

softened expression, but her glance was quickly withdrawn when she saw Ellen looking at her with flashing eyes and glowing cheeks. Mrs. Dempsey, too, had noticed the movement, but she only smiled a melancholy smile, and, opening her prayer-book, commenced to read the Meditation on the First Dolorous Mystery — Christ's agony and prayer in the Garden. As Alice listened to the well-known words, briefly describing the sufferings of our Lord, during his lonely watch in Gethsemane, and remembering that He had borne all that for the sake of sinful man, she began to feel ashamed of herself for having been so angry with Ellen, and at each succeeding meditation of the five, she became more and more contrite, and more firmly resolved to bear everything for the love of him who suffered and died for her. When the Rosary was ended, and the Litany of Loretto recited, they each prayed some time in silence — at least Mrs. Dempsey and Alice did, but when the mother chanced to turn her eyes on her daughter, she saw her dozing over the chair against which she leaned.

“Ah! Ellen! Ellen!” said she, as having finished her own prayers, she roused her daughter from her slumber, “it's no great wonder that you derive but little profit from your prayers. May God grant you more devotion, my poor child!”

Ellen tried to excuse herself on the plea of being tired, and Alice glad of the opportunity to put her good resolution in practice, eagerly put in a word in her behalf. “It was only just that minnit, ma'am, that she began to nod, an' you know she was washin' all the afternoon, so she's tired out.”

Mrs. Dempsey said nothing, but she looked at her daughter, and was glad to see her look gratefully at Alice, while her blushing cheek told a

tale of self-reproach. "Thank you, Alice," said she, and she actually went up to her and took hold of her hand. "I know I didn't deserve such treatment from you, and you're very kind to speak so."

"Thanks be to God," cried the delighted mother, "then all is not lost — Ellen, dear, that's the first pleasure you've given me for many a long day. See now what good example does. I knew very well that it was the bad company you had that was working such a dreadful change on you — but, please God, you'll get round again!"

"Well! I hope so, mother, for indeed I don't like to see you fretting and crying on my account, and for the future I'll do all I can to please you."

"Oh! my child," said Mrs. Dempsey, earnestly, "that's a good motive — the desire of pleasing your mother — but it is not the right one — at least it should not be the only one. If you wish to become really good, and dutiful, and virtuous, you must do everything with a view to please God. Always keep him in view, and you'll be sure to do what is right, and at the same time pleasing to me. If you serve God in all your actions, you're sure to please all good people, and the approbation of the wicked is not worth having. God bless you both, my children — let us now go to bed, as we have to rise early to-morrow."

Before Alice went to sleep, she returned thanks to God for the grace he had bestowed upon her, and begged him to strengthen her in the time of temptation. "I hope," she said within herself, "that Ellen will do better for the future, but if she does not, and goes on in the same way as she did before, I must only pray to not be angry with her, an' I know very well that God will grant me my prayer, and keep me from sin."



CHAPTER VIII.

“Defend me, therefore, say I —
— from the toil
Of dropping buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing up.” — COWPER.

IT was about an hour after Mrs. Dempsey's departure, and around the tea-table in Mr. Finlay's dining-room, the family were assembled. It was a very small one, consisting only of Mr. Finlay, his wife, a son of fourteen or fifteen years old, and a daughter whose age might have been about twelve. The father of the family was a dark-browed, thin-faced man, with a profusion of jet-black hair, and whiskers to match both in color and quantity. There could scarcely have been a greater contrast than that offered by this couple, Mrs. Finlay being, as already shown, of a fair and smiling countenance, the exact reverse of her husband. By a singular, yet by no means unusual freak of nature, the son displayed the delicate and handsome features of his mother, — the same fair, silken hair, and the same look of mildness and good nature, while the daughter had all her father's lineaments, characterized by the same expression, no whit softened. It was strange to see so dark a countenance on one so young, and it might naturally be taken as the index of a sour, repulsive disposition, but not so, Cecilia Finlay

was only a grave, quiet little girl, remarkably sedate and thoughtful, but not at all vindictive.

Mrs. Finlay had just been telling her husband about the pretty little Irish girl whom Mrs. Dempsey had brought with her: "She seems so sensible, and so intelligent," said she, "that you could not help being interested about her."

"I have not much faith in the intelligence of these Irish — young or old," responded the husband dryly — "however, if *you* wish to take the little girl I have no objection, only that she is to renounce popery at once. That is all the condition I impose upon you — for the rest you can do as you please."

Mrs. Finlay smiled, "I'm very much afraid, Charles! that your *one* condition will spoil all." "How?" "Why, it is not an easy matter to get people to 'renounce popery' — in nine cases out of ten, if you made that proposal at first, they would run away from you, terrified and alarmed. Even if you entertain the design of converting a Catholic, it is better to keep your purpose out of view, and work upon them by indirect means. This I say for *your* consideration, for you know I do not pretend to practise the godly craft of proselytizing."

"For shame, Harriet!" said Mr. Finlay, letting his under-jaw drop into the real evangelical position — "it is exceedingly indecorous in a Christian matron to speak so lightly of what appertains to the increase of Christ's kingdom. However, what you say about the method to be pursued is perhaps right, so let us give it a trial. Has this girl any friends here?"

"Yes, she has her father, but he is blind, and is in the Gray Nuns' Asylum. She has an uncle, too, who keeps a tavern somewhere in the suburbs."

“So her father is in the Gray Nunnery!” repeated the husband slowly, and musingly, “Humph! ay! it might be—well! Harriet, you will take the little girl at once. But what about this other—I mean the one whom your popish dressmaker turned off? I hope you are keeping her constantly employed?”

Mrs. Finlay began to play with her spoon, and affected not to hear the last remark, whereupon her husband repeated it in a higher tone.

“Oh! really I cannot say I do,” replied the lady, in a careless tone. “To tell you the truth, Charles, I have no great opinion of that girl!”

“You have not!” said Mr. Finlay, sharply, “and pray what is that to the purpose?—I tell you the girl *must* be an excellent girl—a—a just and righteous girl—yes, Mrs. Finlay!—even so a righteous girl, else had not this Romish woman persecuted her as she has done. You have no great opinion of her!—truly she shall be as a burning lamp in the tabernacle, and as a finger of reproach to the relentless bigotry of Rome. Keep her in work, I tell you again!”

“Why, your pious friend, Mrs. Harley, is going to take her into her house to work all the time for her!” returned Mrs. Finlay, “therefore I have nothing more to do with her.”

“It is well,” replied the gentleman—“she could not have fallen into better hands—we are sure of her now. But since the Harleys will have all the credit of her conversion, we must do our utmost, my dear Harriet, to have a convert of our own. I look on this new *protégé* of yours, therefore, as an especial godsend at the present moment. Now, children, see that neither of you gives any hint to your mamma’s young seamstress that we want to cure her of the errors of popery.

You must both be very careful in this matter, as it is one of great importance."

"Oh! never fear, papa, I'll not blab!" cried Archibald, with a merry laugh. "I can keep a secret as well as any one."

"And I, too, papa," said Cecilia; "you may be sure I'll not say a word to her about religion — poor little Papist — I do so pity her!"

Next day Mrs. Finlay's carriage, with its handsome bays, stopped before the humble dwelling of Mrs. Dempsey, and the lady, seeing that the dressmaker was, as usual, coming out to speak to her, called out in her soft, clear tones, "Never mind, Mrs. Dempsey, I'm coming to pay you a visit to-day." So telling Archibald and Cecilia to remain in her carriage, she alighted and went in.

Mrs. Dempsey threw open the door of a small room opposite the work-room, saying, with a smile, "This is my little parlor, ma'am — will you please to walk in?"

"Certainly I will," replied the lady, as she took her seat on a rush-bottomed chair. "I'm come to ask a favor of you, Mrs. Dempsey, and you must not refuse me," she added, with her sweetest smile.

"Of me, ma'am!" said the dressmaker — "why, indeed, I never expected to hear you asking a favor of me, and if it lies in my power, I'll grant it, and bad right I'd have to do anything else."

"Oh! if it were not in your power to do what I ask, you may be quite sure that I would not take the trouble of coming in person to make my request. In one word — will you give Alice Riordan to me? I have been for some time looking out for just such a girl; as you tell me she is so tidy and so industrious, I should be very glad to get her. What say you, Mrs. Dempsey?"

"Well, ma'am," said Mrs. Dempsey, greatly embarrassed, "I haven't the right of giving her away, as her father only sent her to me to learn her trade, and beyond that I have no control over her."

"Yes, but if Alice agrees to come, will *you* give your consent?"

"Why, ma'am, it's her father that has to be consulted — in so far as I'm concerned I'd freely let her go, as it would oblige you, though she's very useful to me already, but I'm afraid her father wouldn't be pleased, for he wants her to learn the business as fast as she can."

"At all events, we can speak to the little girl herself, and obtain her decision. Will you be kind enough to call her in?"

When Alice appeared she was informed by Mrs. Dempsey that Mrs. Finlay wanted her to go live with her. "What to do, ma'am?" asked the little girl, quickly.

"Why, to help with the plain sewing, which I generally do myself," said Mrs. Finlay, "and to dust the furniture, and such work as that. You will find the situation an easy one, and I shall do all in my power to make you comfortable. As for the wages, I will give you four dollars a month, and Mrs. Dempsey knows that it is more than you could get elsewhere — at your age."

"Well, but my father, ma'am!" said Alice, blushing and looking down — "then I'd be away from him altogether — now I can go to see him very often."

"So you can with us, too. You can see him as often as you like — say, twice a week, and then you will have your two or three dollars to give him every month."

"Oh! but still, ma'am, I wouldn't be gettin'

any nearer taking him out. I know he's very well where he is, an' as comfortable as he can wish himself, but I'll never be satisfied till I can take a place for him, an' support him with my own earnin'. Oh no, ma'am, I can't go — I'm much obliged to you for askin' me, but I can't do it."

"And yet, Alice," said Mrs. Dempsey, with a faint attempt at a smile, "and yet you're anything but happy here — no one knows it better than I do."

"Oh! no matter for that, Mrs. Dempsey, I can put in my time with God's help — I am very well off here, and quite content." She spoke in a firm, positive tone, though her quivering lips and changing countenance betrayed an inward struggle. This Mrs. Finlay saw and tried to profit by it.

"I wish you would change your mind, Alice," she said in a kindly tone. "I know you would be very happy with us."

"I'm sure I would, ma'am," said Alice, again looking down — "I'd like to live with you better than any one — only Mrs. Dempsey — but I can't, ma'am, for Father Smith said it was the best way for me to learn a trade, an' he knows best what I ought to do."

"Ho! ho!" said Mrs. Finlay, with a meaning smile, "so that's how the matter stands. Well! suppose I get Father Smith's consent — will that do?"

"Oh! if you did, ma'am," interposed Mrs. Dempsey, "Alice couldn't hold out any longer, but I'm afraid you'll find it no easy matter to gain his reverence over to let her go into your family. You see, ma'am, I tell you the plain truth."

"And you're perfectly right in doing so, Mrs. Dempsey. "It is because I always find you tell-

ing me the truth that I hold you in such high esteem."

"Well, but, Mrs. Finlay!" said Alice, modestly, "even if Father Smith consented, how could I go and leave Mrs. Dempsey, an' she after partin' with Margaret last week?"

"Oh! never mind that, child!" said Mrs. Finlay, with an approving smile. "Mrs. Dempsey can easily find another in your place; and for the rest, my continued friendship will make up the loss. But I must go now. Good morning, Mrs. Dempsey — good-by, Alice. I hope to have you home with me in a day or two."

Alice smiled and shook her head, but said nothing. When Mrs. Dempsey came in after seeing the lady to the door, they had a long talk about Mrs. Finlay's proposal, and Alice assured Mrs. Dempsey that she would a great deal rather stay with her, in order to learn the business, though she confessed a great liking for Mrs. Finlay. Mrs. Dempsey, on the other hand, told her that the only reason she had for not wishing her to go was on account of Mr. Finlay's being so much against Catholics, "and," said she, "the same man is very much belied if he doesn't do all he can to turn Catholics — when he finds them young and innocent — or poor ignorant servants. That's the sort of a man they say he is, and for my part, I think what they say is true. So you see, Alice, dear, that there's danger in going next or near him, unless one is very well grounded in their faith and able to see the difference between right and wrong in religion."

"Oh! I wouldn't go into their house to live if they'd give me ever so much — my goodness, Mrs. Dempsey, isn't he a curious sort of a man to be goin' on that way tryin' to get people away from

the true faith? Doesn't he know very well that he oughtn't to do that?" And she looked at Mrs. Dempsey with her eyes wide open — literally distended with surprise.

"Why, as to that, Alice," and Mrs. Dempsey laughed heartily as she spoke, "as to that, he pretends to say that *his* is the right religion, and that the Catholic church is all wrong."

"The Lord bless me!" said Alice. "I never thought there were any gentlemen that would be so foolish — sure, my, Oh! the quality ought to be a great deal wiser than us — four dollars a month!" she said to herself — "Oh! indeed if they were to give me *fifty*, I wouldn't live in the same house with that man, for he can't be good that wants to make people give up their religion."

Here Mrs. Dempsey was called by Ellen, and Alice hastened back to the work-room. She was instantly assailed by a shower of questions, on the subject of Mrs. Finlay's visit, and why she had been called into the parlor. Alice tried to put it off with a joke, saying she was going to try how well she could keep a secret — "not that there was much of a secret in it, but then she might as well make the trial on it — so, she'd just as soon they wouldn't ask her."

Being still pressed to tell why she had been called, she became quite serious upon it: "To tell you the truth, girls," said she, "I don't want to tell. It was a little business Mrs. Finlay had with Mrs. Dempsey, an' may be it wouldn't be right for me to come over what I heard — I don't know whether it would or not — but for fear it might not, I'll not say anything about it."

The girls were just putting on their sulky faces, when Mrs. Dempsey made her appearance.

"Very good, indeed, Alice," said she, with a

smile of satisfaction. "I'm very well pleased to hear you say so. You are always on the safe side when you keep secrets in which others are concerned. But though you don't wish to tell what Mrs. Finlay was about, I'll tell it. You must know, girls, that Mrs. Finlay has taken quite a liking to our little Alice, and wants to have her from me."

"Is it possible?" cried one. "Upon my word, she's in luck!" said another. "And will she go?" exclaimed Susan somewhat anxiously.

"No," said Mrs. Dempsey, "she doesn't wish to go because of her father."

"More fool you, Alice!" cried Susan eagerly. "Mrs. Finlay is such a good lady. I know her washwoman very well, and she says there isn't the like of her in Montreal—and she's just as good to Catholics as to Protestants, not like the rest of them that would see us all sunk in the river if they could. It's you that would be well done for, Alice!"

"Well, but there's no use in me thinkin' of it," said Alice, quietly, "when I can't go." So taking up her work she went on with it as though nothing unusual had happened.

It was evident that both Dora and Maria were disposed to envy Alice, for what they called her good luck, and when Ellen came into the work-room in the afternoon, her mother being up stairs, she had on a face of preparation. "So I hear," said she, "that Alice doesn't want to go to Mrs. Finlay. Hem! I suppose she's afraid of having to work harder than she does here."

"No, indeed, Ellen," said Alice, warmly, "it isn't that at all, for I'd sooner be going about doing little turns through the house than sitting all day sewing. I'm not a bit troubled with laziness, I can tell you."

“Well! why don’t you go, then?” and Ellen winked at Dora.

But Alice was somewhat nettled, and didn’t choose to answer. “Just because I don’t like it.”

“Hem!” cried Ellen, in a disdainful tone. “People are getting mighty sharp all of a sudden. I’m sure no one need talk about being good to her father when she refused the offer of four dollars a month, that she might have to pay for his lodging. I know if I had an old blind father living on charity, I’d be glad enough to get such a chance.”

“Shame, Ellen, shame!” cried Susan, “see you have the poor thing crying—you had no business speaking about her father in the way you did. I declare I’ll tell your mother as soon as she comes down.”

But Alice begged of her not to tell—saying that she supposed Ellen did not mean any harm—“only I can’t bear to hear any one makin’ little of my father for bein’ blind, and I think I wouldn’t love him half as well if he had his eyesight,” and her tears continued to flow all the time—“but, dear bless you, and don’t tell, Susan.”

Again was Ellen softened. “Indeed, indeed, Alice, you’re very good.” And that was all she could say, for running out into the kitchen, she wiped away some tears from her own eyes, which she would not have observed.

There was scarcely another word said on the subject till next day, about ten o’clock, when Alice was again summoned to the parlor, and who should she see but Father Smith in earnest conversation with Mrs. Dempsey. Alice made her courtesy, and then stood still, blushing like a full-blown rose.

“So, Alice,” said Mrs. Dempsey, “we are

going to lose you. Father Smith wishes you to go to Mrs. Finlay, who went herself to ask his consent."

"Well, ma'am, if his reverence thinks it best for me to go, of course I *will* go, for only it's right, he wouldn't bid me do it. But, I was thinkin', sir," and she turned towards the priest, "I was thinkin' it would have been better for me to stay here an' learn out my trade on account of my father."

"All very right, Alice, all very right," said the priest, "and only I know that this step will serve your father better in the end, I should never have given my consent. Your father stays where he is for the present, and you go to Mrs. Finlay. You shall see that by the time you would have had your trade learned, you will be in a position to help your father, even better than if you *had* stayed here. But what was the other reason you gave Mrs. Dempsey for not wishing to go—eh, Alice?"

Alice began to roll up the corner of her apron, and kept looking intently at the progress made by her fingers.

"Come, now, Alice," said Father Smith, with encouraging mildness, "don't be ashamed to tell me."

"Well, your reverence, Mrs. Dempsey told me that Mr. Finlay is always tryin' to—to—make people turn."

"Turn!" said the priest, "turn what—their coats—eh?"

"Oh, no, sir—not their coats," cried Alice, gravely, "but their religion; an' so I'm afraid of him."

"No fear—no fear of *you*, with God's help. Only be regular in approaching the sacraments—keep close to God in prayer—never putting your

trust in your own strength, and there is not the least danger. Brought up as you have been, you can easily detect the falsehood that will be brought to bear upon your religion — so, go in God's name. In order to encourage you, Alice, I will tell you a little secret. Pious Mr. Finlay intends to make a convert of you — you need not look so astonished, Mrs. Dempsey, for what I tell her is not a jest; it is a positive fact. The good gentleman calculates on having Alice to bear witness against popery, at their next Bible meeting."

"Well! well!" exclaimed Mrs. Dempsey, "if they aren't the greatest humbugs of all I ever heard of! So that's the reason Mrs. Finlay got leave to take her." Father Smith nodded.

"But I'm much mistaken in Alice," said he, with a smile, "if she don't let them see what popery really *is*, and set them in the right, young as she is."

"Ah! but, your reverence," said Alice, timidly, "I'm afraid I'll never be able to answer them when they're talkin' about religion. If I only had some more book learnin'!"

"Well! I'm going to send you some books that will help you; I'll send them in an hour or so, before you have your clothes packed." He then arose to go.

"But, sir," said Alice, "won't I want to go and see my father, and tell him what I'm goin' to do?"

"Of course, you can go and *see* your father, but I have been to see him already, and he is quite pleased with the step you are about to take. But you ought to go and tell him, nevertheless; in order to pay him proper respect. Mrs. Finlay is to call for you about five o'clock. God bless you both!" and so saying he hurried away. When

the promised parcel came, it was found to contain three small volumes — *The Grounds of the Catholic Doctrine*, *Milner's End of Controversy*, and *St. Francis de Sales' Introduction to a Devout Life*.

"These are your arms, Alice," said Mrs. Dempsey. "You must learn to use them cautiously and prudently. Two of them are meant to show you the grounds of your religion, and to furnish you with answers to those who would make you believe it a wrong one, and the other — *The Introduction* — is to teach you how to regulate your own life — in it you see all the beauty of our holy religion, and if you only follow the advice it gives you, you'll be happy here and hereafter."

"Well! ma'am, I'll do my best, with the help of God."

"Very well, Alice — very well; it's an old saying that *best can do no more*. Come now and let us have some dinner, before you go to the Nunnery."

"Oh! thank you, ma'am — I'm not a bit hungry; I'd rather go at once, so as to have a good while to stay with my father."

"Oh, you'll have time enough; come in, child!"

After dinner, Alice went to see her father. He seemed to be afraid lest his daughter might give way to the temptation which was to beset her on all sides, and though the priest had explained the matter to him in a way that induced him to give his consent, yet still he trembled for his child's spiritual welfare. "May the Lord keep you from all harm, Alice, dear, an' give you grace to do what is right. Only for what his reverence told me, I wouldn't let you go into such a house for a mint of money."

"Why, what did he tell you, father?" asked Alice, with some curiosity.

"Oh, no matter," returned Cormac, evasively, "I'll tell you some other time. You know you have to hurry now. Mind, you're to come to see me twice a week — an' Alice, above all things, I lay it on you to say the Litany of the Blessed Virgin every night, when you're at your prayers. You'll do that now, won't you?"

"Indeed, then, I will, father dear; even if you didn't bid me, I'd do it, for we always used to say it at home; you know, an' I couldn't go to sleep in comfort without sayin' it. But, father, did my uncle ever come to see you at all?"

"Oh, indeed he did, Alice — sure, wasn't it a great forget of me, not to tell you — he did indeed come to see me, about a week ago, an' very friendly an' kind he was, too. He had a long talk with Sister O'Malley here in the parlor, an' she said after he was gone that she had great hopes of him yet, for all he seems to be so taken up with the world. They're all well at his house, but Thompson's gone away to the States. I think it's time for you to go now, Alice; an' God knows I have neither heart nor eye in the money you're goin' to earn; I'd rather far have you at Mrs. Dempsey's, only, to be sure, Father Smith knows best; so go in God's name, an' my blessin' go with you." He could not say another word, and Alice only squeezed his hand in silence, and went away, turning back when she got to the door to tell him that she would come again on the following Sunday.

A little before five o'clock, Mrs. Finlay's carriage drove up, and Alice, who had been some time in readiness, got up in the back seat, her little bundle was handed to her by Susan; everybody — even Ellen — came to the door with kind wishes and farewells. Mrs. Dempsey and Susan

were seen to wipe their eyes more than once, and the worthy dressmaker murmured a fervent — “God’s blessing be with you, child!” and the carriage rolled away.

Alice was at first inclined to cry, but very soon, the novelty of being in such a fine carriage turned her thoughts another way, and she began to say to herself — “My goodness, if my Uncle Dinny, an’ old Catty, an’ them all, could only see me now! I’m sure, it’s themselves would be overjoyed. Well! to be sure, but it *is* nice.”

When Mrs. Finlay got home, she rang for the housemaid, who was the only Catholic servant in the house. “Bridget! here’s another little Irish girl, and one of your own creed, too. I hope you’ll be very good friends.”

“O! never fear, ma’am,” said Bridget, “the little girl looks well, an’ I think we’ll do first rate together. What is she going to do, ma’am?”

“To help *you*, when you require it, and to sew for me when she has nothing else to do. Has Miss Finlay got home yet?”

“No, ma’am — Master Archy came in a little while ago, but he took his pony and went off to meet his papa.”

“Very well, Bridget, take Alice with you, and show her where to put her things. She is to share your room.”

When Mr. Finlay and his son came home, Mrs. Finlay told her husband that she had got the little girl. “But I had to go to the Seminary myself,” said she, “to beg her of Father Smith.”

“I must say, Harriet,” said her husband, “that you degraded yourself exceedingly by taking such a step. It is no wonder that those Romish priests are so overbearing and so presuming when even you — you, Mrs. Finlay — condescend to pay court

to them. Know you not, that by going after that man to ask his consent, you tacitly acknowledged his authority, and thereby acted in total contradiction to our principles?"

"But, mamma," cried Archy, "were you indeed in the Seminary? I'm sure it's a queer sort of place — very dark and gloomy, but very grand, I suppose."

"Why do you think it must be so grand, Archy?" demanded his mother, with a gay laugh.

"Oh, because — because papa and Mrs. Harley and every one says that the priests are *so* rich — you know, mamma, they have more money than any one could count — I dare say they have it in great iron chests — did you see any there?"

"Well, I cannot say I did, Archy," said Mrs. Finlay, and she laughed heartily at the incongruous idea. "I must take you some day to see the Seminary, in order to show you that it is neither very dark nor very gloomy, nor yet very grand — nor is there a chest of any kind to be seen, either wood or iron. People who talk in that way about the Seminary, and about the priests, know very little of either one or the other, and will not take the trouble to see for themselves. I had heard those absurd stories so often that I willingly laid hold of the opportunity to examine for myself. I tell you, Archy! there is not a particle of grandeur, or of luxury, visible in what I saw; all is clean and neat, but poor and simple, and as for the priests, Mr. Finlay," she added, turning to him, "it is in them I really see Christian meekness and Christian humility exemplified. With many, these are but empty sounds, never reduced to practice; but it is not so with the Catholic clergy. I have never seen one of them yet who deserved to be set down as

‘overbearing’ or ‘presuming.’ If you would only give a very little attention to their words and actions — their *real* words and actions, mind you, not what is attributed to them on our platforms, then your opinion would soon change.”

“Really, Harriet,” said Mr. Finlay, drawing himself up, and knitting his dark brows together, “really you go somewhat too far with your silly advocacy of popery when you recommend *me* to hold intercourse with these people. No, Mrs. Finlay, it is not in accordance with my principles — and you know it is not — to associate with Jesuitical persons. I hold themselves and their principles in utter contempt; and, so I think, should all who profess to love and respect the Bible — the Bible, against which these unhappy Romanists are openly arrayed. O! Mrs. Finlay! Mrs. Finlay! I grieve for your delusion — would that your darkened understanding might be opened to the light of evangelical truth!”

“Thank you, Charles! thank you very much,” replied his wife, resolutely repressing the smile which played about the corners of her mouth. “I do sincerely trust that God will reveal to me the light of truth; but for the present, I think, we had better go to dinner.”

It was then half-past five, but as Montreal is rapidly progressing in refinement and civilization, of course its *élite* all dine at aristocratic hours — no family having any pretensions to *elegance* or fashion would think of dining at the old-fashioned hours of by-gone days — so the dinner, which in old times was the mid-day meal, is now transferred to the evening, that is, in all houses where good style is affected.

“So passed the day — the evening fell,
’Twas near the time of curfew bell.”

Ay, and long past it, too, for the hall clock had struck *ten* when "the little world below," were all summoned to the upper regions, and as the servants moved up stairs one after another, Alice whispered to Bridget, "Why, where in the world are we all going."

"Why, to *worship*, to be sure—to family worship."

"Family worship," repeated Alice. "Is that the Rosary—or what is it?" But Bridget could not answer, for just then, the dining-room door was opened by the cook, who led the van, and in they all marched, rank and file.

Mr. Finlay was seated at the table in awful dignity, with a large folio Bible before him. Mrs. Finlay sat in a rocking-chair at a little distance. Archy was playing with his favorite dog—a shaggy animal of the Newfoundland breed—and Cecilia sat at the table, right opposite to her father, looking as grave and serious as himself. The servants glided into their several places, with mechanical regularity, and Mrs. Finlay, seeing that Alice looked somewhat puzzled, and stood alone in the middle of the room, made a sign to her to sit down. Mr. Finlay looked at her with keen scrutiny, but "never a word spoke he." Opening his Bible, he began to read in a deep, solemn voice, and of all chapters in the Bible what should he read but that one from the Apocalypse wherein is described the seven-horned beast. Alice listened, and listened, and wondered as she listened, for though perfectly familiar with all the practical and didactic parts of the Scripture, from hearing the Gospels and Epistles read and expounded by the priests, she had never been initiated into the high and mystic revelations of the favored Apostle. But she was not long left to ponder

on the meaning of what she had heard, for, the chapter ended, Mr. Finlay began to explain it, according, as it would seem, to his usual custom. What was Alice's surprise, when she heard him solve the enigma to the effect that *the beast*, of whom St. John spoke, was no other than the Church of Rome — his seven horns the seven hills on which the city of Rome is built, and so on. Then again, he turned to the account of the scarlet woman, given by the same mystic writer, and her ladyship was also identified with the same church — God help her. Then, worthy Mr. Finlay closed his book and went on to descant upon the minute points of resemblance in each case. Mrs. Finlay glanced at Alice, and was amused to see the blank astonishment with which she gazed on Mr. Finlay, drinking in his words — albeit that they were “of learned length and thundering sound.”

After giving what he considered a *triumphant* exposition of the passages in question — proving, beyond all doubt, that St. John could have had nothing else in view when he painted those mysterious portraits, but the manifold abominations of the Romish Church, Mr. Finlay pushed back his chair and knelt, facing his congregation, who, of course, followed his example. Alice pulled out her beads, and was beginning to say her own prayers internally, when Mr. Finlay happened to look towards her. Stopping in the middle of a moving petition that all men might be freed from the galling trammels of superstition, he commanded the beads to be put away.

“Ah! then, *why*, if you please, sir?”

“Because, my good girl, we don't practise any such mummary here. Put away the beads and repeat the prayers after me.”

"I can't, sir," said Alice, stoutly, "they're not *our* prayers, and I can't say them."

Mr. Finlay looked most *unchristianly* angry, but he bit his lip, and went on with his extemporaneous prayer, and Alice, very quietly, said her Rosary, blessing herself at every decade with as much devotion as though at home at her Uncle Dinny's fireside, and not a Protestant within a square mile of her. But the best of it was, that Archy espied the beads, and having watched Alice for some time, he burst into a loud laugh, whereupon his father again stopped to express his horror of such *unchristian* levity.

"I can't help it, papa," said Archy, still laughing, "when I see the little girl there — the new-comer — counting over her beads, and her lips moving all the time, and she looking *so* pious. If you want *me* to keep from laughing, you must send her away, or else take the beads from her."

"Fie, fie, Archy!" said his mother, reproachfully, while his father turned an awful look on Alice, and saying, "The boy is right — I ought not to have permitted so great a scandal," he ordered her sternly to put up her beads. Alice obeyed, but moving over into a corner and thrusting her fingers in her ears so as to shut out what she did not choose to hear, she went on a little longer with her own prayers, Mr. Finlay pretending not to notice her. But quiet did not reign long, for when Archy looked again at Alice, the sight was fatal to his gravity, and his mirth was then contagious, for mistress, and butler, and coachman, cook and housemaid, all burst out laughing, and in the midst of the general uproar, Mr. Finlay took hold of Alice by the shoulder, with one hand, and snatched her beads with the other. Himself he thrust out into the hall and

banged the door after her, then flung the beads into the fire which burned in the grate.

"Our worship has been strangely interrupted," said he, motioning to the servants to kneel once more, "let us now resume it. Mrs. Finlay, I request that you will lay your commands on that girl, and instruct her to assist decorously at our family prayers."

Mrs. Finlay smiled assent, and the prayers, being resumed, went on and ended, without further interruption, though Danger, the favorite, was very near causing another outbreak by jumping on Archy's back, where he knelt against a chair, his young master slyly encouraging his advances, for he dearly loved mischief, even when it broke in on the solemnity of family worship.





CHAPTER IX.

Whatever creed be taught, or land be trod,
Man's conscience is the oracle of God! — BYRON.

ALL the next day the servants made merry over the occurrence of the preceding night, and many a hearty laugh was Alice compelled to hear at her own expense. Even Bridget ridiculed the idea of her taking out her beads and attempting to say her own prayers, and in the afternoon when they were alone together she began to represent to her the folly of such conduct.

“Folly!” said Alice — “do you call *that* folly? — well! the way I’ll do to-night, an’ every other night, I’ll not go in at all — do you hear that now, Bridget?”

“I do, but I don’t b’lieve a word of it — I suppose you mean what you say, but you’ll not get leave to do it. If you want to live in the house you must do what the master bids you, in joining in the prayers. He wouldn’t have any one in the house that wouldn’t go in to worship.”

“No,” cried Alice, “well! then, no Catholic ought to live in his house, for we’re forbidden to join with any other people in their worship, an’ you know if we don’t obey the church we’re not God’s children. I’ll not go in at any rate, for

I got enough of their prayers last night. How in the world, Bridget, could you listen to such talk as Mr. Finlay had in the room above about our church?"

"Oh!" said Bridget, with a laugh, "I'm so used to it now, that I don't care a pin about it, though at first I used to be very angry, just as you are now. When *you* get used to it you'll not care either."

"I'll never be used to it," returned Alice, "for, with God's help, I'll let them pray by themselves — not a foot I'll set up stairs to-night."

"Well! you'll see," said Bridget, "if you don't go to worship, out you go!"

"Very well!" replied Alice, "you'll see, too. God is stronger than the devil, they *may* put me out, but they'll not get me to go in, any way."

Mrs. Finlay never spoke on the subject all the day, and Alice thought that she looked coldly upon her. It might be fancy, but still it made her feel very uncomfortable, for already she began to love Mrs. Finlay, and to set a high value on her approbation. Several times she was on the point of attempting a justification of her conduct, but as often did her courage fail, and so the day passed away, night came on again, and at last the clock struck, and the bell rang for *worship*.

"Come, Alice!" said Bridget, as she prepared to follow the others up stairs. "You may as well come at once, for the master will only be sending for you."

"No," said Alice — "I won't go, I'm just goin' to say my prayers where I am. I've no beads now, but I can count the decades on my fingers when I'm at the Rosary."

Bridget went up: — in a few minutes the dining-room bell rang — Alice went up to the door, opened

it half way and held it in her hand. "Were you wantin' me, sir?"

"My good girl," said Mr. Finlay — "why did you not come up with your fellow-servants — you must always be ready to come with the others. Come in now, and sit down. For this time, I will overlook your fault."

But Alice did not move a step. She looked at the big book wherefrom Mr. Finlay had read about the bad woman in scarlet, about the ugly beast, and then she looked at the long, grave face of her master, and it required a muster of all her courage to say what she wished to say: "If you please, sir, you'll let me say my prayers below in the kitchen; I can't say the same prayers that you do, an' I don't like to hear the things that you told us last night."

"Sit down, I tell you!" said Mr. Finlay, sternly — "sit down, unhappy girl! and listen to the word of God."

"I can't, sir," said Alice stoutly, though her heart throbbed violently, and her tongue almost refused to articulate the words, so great was her fear of Mr. Finlay.

"You cannot!" he repeated still more sternly, "and why not? — wherefore do you give way so far to the prompting of the devil?"

"It isn't the devil, sir — the Lord stand between me an' him — it's because I'm a Catholic, an' we're not allowed to join in worship with any but ourselves."

"And how is it that Bridget and other Romanists that we have had here, have not refused to join us in prayer?"

"I don't know, sir, that's their own affair, but *I* can't do it without committin' sin, an' that I'll not do for any one, with the help of God."

"You are a most impudent girl," said Mr. Finlay, endeavoring to restrain his rising passion. "I fear the evil one has your soul firmly bound."

"Oh! Cross of Christ between us and harm!" cried Alice, and she blessed herself most solemnly. A general laugh followed, in which even Mrs. Finlay had to join. But her husband waxed more angry still. "May I go down, sir?" asked Alice.

"No, you poor misguided creature! you *shall* remain here."

"Well, sir, if I do, mind I'll not join in the prayers, nor I didn't last night either, an' for the readin' an' preachin' I'll not hear a word of them, for I'll stop my ears as I did last night. So you may as well let me go!"

"My dear, I think you had better let Alice go down stairs," said Mrs. Finlay, "you know if she does as she says her conduct will only be a scandal to our young people. Do let her go!" Mr. Finlay was silent, but there was a thunder-cloud lowering on his brow. His wife nodded to Alice, and the latter was very glad to make her escape to the lower regions.

When worship was over, and the servants returned to the kitchen, Alice was ordered up stairs again: "Now you'll catch it," said Bridget, and the others all laughed. "I guess she will!" said Bill, the coachman, "she'll be lowered a peg, or my name's not Bill Rogers."

Meanwhile Alice was again confronted with her master. "Girl," said he, "I wish you to understand that if you are to remain in my service you must join us in our family worship. I cannot have any one in the house who refuses to perform that Christian act."

"Then you'll not have me, sir," returned the little girl, quickly, "for I've told you already that I

can't join in your worship—I'm a Catholic, sir, so there's no use in tryin' to get me to do what our church forbids."

"*Your church!*" said her master contemptuously—"and pray, my good girl! what right has your church—or any church—to forbid you to worship God."

"She doesn't forbid me to worship God, sir,—she commands me to worship him an' to pray to him, ever an' always, but she forbids her children to join in worship or in prayer with them that don't belong to our religion, or haven't the same faith that we have. That's the reason, sir, an' if you don't like to let me say my prayers as I was taught to say them, or if you don't want to have any about you that won't come in to worship, I'm ready and willin' to go back to Mrs. Dempsey."

This cooled Mr. Finlay down somewhat, for he feared to lose his chance of making a convert. "Oh! I did not exactly mean that you should leave us on that account, my little girl. I believe Mrs. Finlay is pleased with you in every respect, so, for the present, I will dispense with your attendance at family prayers—hoping that the Holy Spirit may speedily enlighten your mind, and dispel the shades of bigotry and superstition wherewith your priests have obscured it. You can go down now!"

"Bedad! then, if that's the way," said Bridget, who had come in unobserved by another door, on pretence of asking the mistress a question about something, "if that's the way of it, Mr. Finlay, I'll not *worship* any more either, for if you give one lave to stay out, you can't refuse it to another, bekase I'm a Catholic, too, an' will be, plase God!"

"Bravo, Biddy! bravo!" cried Archy, clapping

his hands and jumping from his seat, "that's the girl can talk."

"Dear me!" said Cecilia, raising her hands in horror, "what strange people these Romanists are — they do so hate to pray or to listen to the blessed word of God!"

As for Mr. Finlay, he was far too indignant to vouchsafe an answer, so he requested his wife with forced composure to send "those impertinent hussies" down stairs. A sign from their mistress was quite enough, and both instantly withdrew.

"Now, Mrs. Finlay," said her husband, suddenly stopping in front of her, for he had been striding to and fro, up and down the room. "Now I think you will agree with me that *your pet* is a most mischievous creature."

"Really I do not think so, Charles!" replied Mrs. Finlay, in her sweetest tones. "I have seen nothing by her as yet that could induce me to coincide with your opinion. She is a most industrious, faithful girl!"

"But do you not see what mischief she has already wrought?"

"I see no mischief that *she* has effected," was the calm reply.

"How so, madam?" demanded the husband, sternly. "Has she not twice disturbed the harmony of our worship, though scarcely two days in the house? Has she not given a bad example to our servants by her want of reverence for the Holy Bible, and finally, has she not openly and audaciously braved my authority?"

Before Mrs. Finlay would attempt a reply she sent Archy and Cecilia to their respective chambers, being unwilling that they should hear anything approaching to contention between their parents. Then she said: "Now, Charles! listen

to me: in the first place, I deny that Alice has given bad example to the other servants, for I think she treated you, all things considered, with proper respect—not one impudent or improper word I heard her say throughout the whole affair; in the next place, it was not her fault if the general peace was disturbed, since it was wrong in you to attempt forcing her to do what her conscience forbid her to do. Lastly, I deny that she was wrong in disobeying you, since she must either disobey you or her church, and as she believes the latter to have authority from God, she *must* obey her commands; she had to choose between your commands and those of her religion, and for my part I think all the more of her for having done as she did. You need not look so astonished, Charles! you ought to know that I never hesitate about giving my real opinion.”

“Oh, undoubtedly, Mrs. Finlay!” replied her husband, with a sneer, “I ought to know that you are generally on the side of popery. I give you joy of your Romish propensities.”

“Nay, that is unfair, Charles,” returned the lady, “I profess no partiality for the church of Rome, or her tenets, but I like to see every one fairly dealt by—the only difference is that I can see virtues in a Catholic, and can respect their scruples—that is all.”

The conversation went on in a similar strain till the timepiece over the fireplace chimed out the eleventh hour, yet even then Mrs. Finlay had not succeeded in convincing her husband that Catholic servants ought to be left in submission to the decrees of their church, nor could Mr. Finlay get his wife to acknowledge that in proselytism, as in war, every stratagem is allowable.

Next night, when ten o'clock came round, neith-

er Alice nor Bridget went up to worship, but said their prayers quietly together in the kitchen, not forgetting the Litany which Alice had promised her father to say every night. Archy told next day before all the servants that his papa was quite cross over night! "he was mad as a hatter," said he, "but he didn't want to let *us* see it, but I saw the anger in his very nose, for when papa's angry, *it* always swells, and gets quite red. I think he was all the time trying to invent some plan, for even when he was reading the chapter for us — I don't remember what it was about — but when he was reading it, you could see him, as Biddy would say, 'cudgelling his brains,' — at any rate, between you both — you pair of unfortunate papists — you spoiled poor papa's prayers last night. Except when he was praying for the downfall of *the man of sin*, that was the only petition he put up. Hurrah! Bill, come, and get my pony saddled — quick now!" and away he ran to the stable, to superintend the equipping of his steed.

"By the hole o' my coat, Alice!" said Bridget, as she reached up to a high nail for her best broom — "by the hole o' my coat, I'll never be bamboozled again with their worship. I see there's nothing like standing up for one's own. Now, *I* never had either love or likin' for their prayers, an' God help me! it used to go to my heart to hear the master goin' on about popery, but still I daren't refuse to go in, until you come, an' set me the good example. It'll be a lesson to me all my life, plase the Lord."

By this time Cecilia was gone to school, and Mrs. Finlay called Alice up stairs. "Alice," said she, "Bridget tells me that you have got some very good books — will you just let me see them? I should like to read some Catholic books, in order

to see whether your religion is as bad as it is said to be — though, indeed, I know it is not."

Alice brought down three books which Father Smith had given her, together with a small copy of the *Imitation of Christ* which Mrs. Dempsey had given her as a keepsake. "Here's all the books I have, ma'am — except my prayer book. That little one — *The Grounds of the Catholic Doctrine* — I'm readin' now myself an' I want to read it over an' over again, till I get it all into my head."

Mrs. Finlay smiled. "So you are laying in your ammunition, Alice." "Ma'am?" said Alice, inquiringly, the last word being too long for her understanding. "I mean to say that you are preparing your answers."

"Well, indeed, you've just guessed it, ma'am. It seems that people lay themselves out for turnin' Catholics, if they can find them ignorant of their religion, so with God's help I'll try to be up to them. I hope you're not angry with me, ma'am, for sayin' so?"

"Not at all, Alice, not at all, I think it is your duty to study the grounds whereon your religion is based, so that you may be able to defend it when attacked in your presence. Will you lend me these other books? I have often heard of them, and should like much to read them."

"Oh! you're heartily welcome to them, ma'am," said Alice, "an' as soon as ever I'm done with the other, you'll have it too. Will you please to give me that spencer of Miss Cecilia's, ma'am, that you want me to alter?"

The spencer was given, and Mrs. Finlay told Alice to sit down and do it where she was, "so that I may show you the way I wish to have it done."

Mrs. Finlay gradually drew her young seam-

stress into little confidential stories of "life in Ireland," and as she listened to the simple, unpolished accounts of things that had of old made the sum and substance of Alice's life, she formed her own estimate, and drew her own deductions, and her heart began to soften towards the kindly, unsophisticated peasantry of Ireland, with their beautiful superstitions — grounded, for the most part, on the virtues which shine brightest in the national character — and above all with their simple, earnest faith, and profound veneration for all that concerns religion. She could not help observing, too, that her young *protégée* was endowed with no ordinary share of penetration and good sense, while her mind was as guileless as that of a young child.

When it was near the hour for Mr. Finlay's appearance, Alice was sent up stairs with her work, and Mrs. Finlay, tying on her bonnet, and throwing a shawl over her shoulders, walked to meet her husband and son, for the latter, who attended the High School, was usually at home with his father. When all three had reached the house they found Cecilia there before them, and dinner was immediately ordered up. Just then Alice came in again to ask some question about her work, and while Mrs. Finlay was arranging it for her Archy asked his mamma whether she had heard the joke about old Busby.

"No, my dear — what is it?"

"Why, you know, mamma, he goes to Mr. McClintock's meeting, and on Sunday last he was there as usual. It happened that the minister was a little late, and made the congregation cool their heels waiting for him ——"

"Archy!" interposed his father, "I request that you will speak more reverently of that godly man, Mr. McClintock!"

"Certainly, sir," said Archy. "Well, mamma, as I was telling you, that godly man, the Rev. Jonas Ezekiel McClintock. Will that do, papa?"

"Go on, sir!"

"Yes, papa — well, ma'am, 'silence reign'd' (as some of the poets say) and you might have heard a pin fall on the floor, when all of a sudden somebody burst out laughing and then another and then another — hip, hip, hurrah! — it was laugh — laugh, until the whole place was in an uproar. 'Why, what in the world is it!' cried Samuel Hopkins, who told me the story. 'Oh! look behind and you'll see!' said another. 'Look at old Busby.' Sam looked, and sure enough there was my old gent, in quiet possession of his pew, with his feet stretched on the opposite seat, and he leaning back most luxuriously — his coat taken off — his pocket-handkerchief thrown over his head, and he reading a newspaper, spread out at full stretch before him. Oh! for the pencil of Hogarth!" continued Archy, bursting into an uncontrollable fit of laughing — "why, mamma, did ever you hear a better joke?"

Mrs. Finlay laughed heartily, but not even a smile broke in on the sombre gravity of her husband's visage, though even Cecilia joined in the general merriment. Mr. Finlay sat looking from one to another, apparently waiting till the laugh was over. Then he spoke.

"Really, Mrs. Finlay! it is no wonder that your son has no greater respect for religion and its ministers, since you encourage him to mock at both."

"I beg your pardon, Charles, it was neither at the church nor the minister we laughed, it was at the easy *nonchalance* of our old friend Busby, who made such good use of his time while he waited for the preacher. I grant you the joke would not tell well at one of our Bible meetings, but no mat-

ter, even Bible Christians must come down off their stilts at times, and enjoy a good laugh. We're not at a meeting now, you know; but here's the dinner. Oh, pray, forgive poor Archy; he meant no harm, I assure you."

"But why did he begin to tell such a story before that Alice? I should not have minded it half so much had not she been there; but now it will get wind amongst all these Jesuit people, who have their spies everywhere, and are always on the watch for what we say and do."

"Trust me, not half so often as you seem to think, Charles!" replied his wife. "I am inclined to believe that the Catholic clergy—Jesuits, if you will—do not give themselves very much trouble about our affairs, so long as we let them and theirs alone."

When the servants were withdrawn, after dinner, Mrs. Finlay gave her husband an account of her morning's conversation with Alice, omitting, however, all that related to the books she had borrowed. "I tell you what, Charles," she concluded, "that same little girl has a very superior mind."

"Indeed!" cried Mr. Finlay, "if so, we must endeavor to bring her over at all risks—now we are to have a meeting in the course of a few weeks, and we must positively try to secure her before then, or at least, to get her into the right path. To-morrow, before I go into town, I shall have a conversation with her. Mrs. Harley tells me that her girl—that Miss Hanlon—is perfectly willing to give testimony. She describes her as being a most promising subject."

"For perdition!" said Mrs. Finlay to herself, but aloud she said, "Very well, Charles, you can try your persuasive powers on *my* girl, though I rather fear you will not succeed."

"We shall see that, Harriet — we shall see. What say you all to a walk now? the moon will soon rise, and the evening is very fine."

The proposal was joyfully accepted by all his hearers, and the whole quartette sallied forth to see the mellow moon of September raise her disc from behind the blue line of the river, and the far-off mountain of Belœil. They talked of the natural curiosity embosomed amongst those mountains, and Mr. Finlay described to his children how the lake is situated on the top of one of them, in a wild and Alpine region. "It reminds one," said he, "of the accounts given by travellers of one of the Swiss Alps, which is called by the neighboring peasantry, Pontius Pilate, for it, too, has a small lake on its summit. When a storm is at hand, they can always tell by the black cloud which encircles that dreary mountain, which cloud they call 'Pontius Pilate's nightcap.'"

"Papa!" said Archy, "why don't you always talk as you do now? When you're talking away at the papists, I'd as soon be a hundred miles away, for I'm sick of that. I think I wouldn't like Catholics half so well as I do, if I didn't hear them all the time abused. And then I love to hear you talk about anything else, father — you *do* speak so well."

Mr. Finlay condescended to smile, and merely saying, "You will be of a different opinion when you are older," he purposely changed the conversation.

The next day was Saturday, and early in the afternoon Mrs. Harley called. Alice was at work in the sitting-room, and Mrs. Finlay said, with a smile, as she rose to go up to the drawing-room, "I am now going to be regaled with some spicy anecdotes of popish superstition, or popish persecu-

tion, or perchance some dark tale of priestly magic. Oh! for the patience of the patriarch of old!"

When Mrs. Finlay entered the drawing-room, she found her visitor standing in entranced admiration before an engraved likeness of John Wesley, and Mrs. Finlay had to repeat her salutation a second time before it was heard.

"Good morning, Mrs. Harley," and she touched her arm, "why, you appear quite wrapped up in admiration of that engraving. I believe you have not seen it before."

"Oh! dear, Mrs. Finlay, how you did startle me! Yes, I *have* been gazing with manifold emotions on the saintly countenance of that great and good man—the illustrious reformer of the Anglican Church. You are very fortunate, I assure you, in possessing such a treasure."

Mrs. Finlay bowed slightly, and then asked for Mrs. Harley's family. "They are all in excellent health," said she, "with the exception of myself."

"I am sorry to hear you make such an exception, my dear Mrs. Harley. What is the matter with you?"

"Oh! the old complaint—my nerves. I have had a most fearful shock since I saw you last."

"Indeed!" cried Mrs. Finlay, "of what nature—may I ask?"

"Why, our old butler, Tom Carney, is dead, and what do you think, when he found himself getting near death, he called out for a priest. Only think of that, my dear Mrs. Finlay! when the wretched old man had been so long passing himself off for a good Protestant."

"It was a great disappointment, indeed!" said Mrs. Finlay, trying to keep from laughing. "But how did it end? Did you send for a priest, as he desired?"

“Well, when I heard of his strange request, I went up myself to the garret where he lay, and represented to him the inconsistency of his conduct; but I could not get him to listen. I proposed to send for Mr. Reed — ‘no’ — ‘no’ — he wouldn’t hear of it. ‘What good could Mr. Reed do an unhappy sinner like him?’ I then offered to have Mr. Harley come in and read some chapters in the Bible for him, and that we would all pray with him and for him, but he snapped at me as though he would have bitten my nose off. “I don’t want your prayers, ma’am — they’d be no use to me now — an’ for readin’ the Bible, it’s little comfort that would give me. No, no; it’s too long I’ve been schamin’ on you; but now I can schame no longer. For the love o’ God, mistress dear, will you send for a priest? Father Smith, or any of them that speaks English. Oh, *wirra — wirra* — mother of God! pray for me that that I may live and have my speech to confess my sins afore I lave the world. I know I’m not worthy; but then I’m sorry — sorry — sorry to the heart for listenin’ to them that put bad in my head. Och, Mrs. Harley, dear! if you have any pity in you heart, send off, quick — quick.’ This was the way in which he continued to talk —”

“But did you comply with his request?” interrupted Mrs. Finlay, as she wiped away the tears which she could not repress.

“Oh, of course I did! You wouldn’t have had me make the poor unfortunate man’s last moments miserable. But there was some difficulty in finding a priest, as there are so few in the Seminary, it seems, who speak English; and you would really have thought that Tom was losing his senses, so great was his fear of dying without a priest. With a view to console him, I took up the

Bible, and told him I was going to read something that would give him comfort, and help to prepare him for death—I meant, I said, the justification by faith alone.

“‘Justification here or there,’ says he, ‘I want the priest—oh, Lord! oh, Lord! what will I do at all—death is on me—an’ how will I face the judgment seat with all this load of sin on my miserable soul.’

“But, Tom, my poor man, you believe in Jesus Christ, do you not?”

“‘I do—Oh, God knows I do,’ was the answer, ‘I b’lieve all that the church teaches; oh, sweet Saviour! didn’t I b’lieve all that I ought to b’lieve when I was only a *gossoon* in Ireland; didn’t I larn it all at home with my poor ould mother that had more religion in her little finger than these grand people have in their body an’ soul! Go away with the Bible, ma’am; I know it’s God’s book, but it can’t hear my confession, nor give me absolution; nor it can’t put the blessed oil on me, nor give me the holy communion.’”

“Well!” cried Mrs. Finlay, anxiously, “did the priest arrive in time?”

“Why, yes, he did—just when the unhappy old man was at the height of his delirium—for delirium it must have been—I heard a stranger’s foot on the stairs. Tom started, and clapped his hands and shouted, ‘Thanks be to the Lord! here comes his *real* minister!’ and I hastily withdrew by another door, having no fancy for meeting one of these gloomy Jesuits, who can work up people’s minds to such a state as I have described. He stayed with him for about an hour, or an hour and a half, and by that time all was ended—poor Tom! I had better hopes of him! Isn’t it a strange thing that you can’t depend on the conversion of these papists?”

Mrs. Finlay laughed at the earnestness with which the question was put. "Not at all, my dear Mrs. Harley! I have long since made the discovery that they are never *really* converted; that is to say, brought over to Protestant views of religion; some of them may *appear* to be so, from one motive or another, but as soon as ever they find themselves in danger of death it is all over with their Protestantism; one who has been a Catholic seldom or never *dies* protesting against popery; death tears off the mask of hypocrisy, and lays bare the *real* belief."

"Why, how strongly you *do* talk!" cried Mrs. Harley, "one would really think you were more than half a Romanist yourself. But, *apropos* to that—have you not got a little Catholic girl here of whom Mr. Finlay has great hopes? He tells me she is much too keen-witted and intelligent to remain long in such spiritual bondage."

"Yes! I have got a girl here named Alice Riordan; a very pretty, and a very engaging little damsel, and what is more, she is discreet, modest and obedient."

"Dear me! how fortunate you are. I hope sincerely you may soon get her brought over to true religion."

"I shall not try to do so, my good friend," was the quiet answer.

"No! and why not, pray?"

"Because, by so doing, I should but spoil a naturally good and lovely disposition. As I told you a while ago, I have no faith in conversions from the Catholic religion; it is all a sham——"

"Really, Mrs. Finlay, I am at a loss to understand——"

"Remember Tom Carney, my dear madam," said Mrs. Finlay, archly, "I could not presume

to succeed in such an attempt, when even *you* failed; though I know you *did* at one time believe Tom to be a good Protestant. But I had forgotten to ask — how do you like your new seamstress?"

Mrs. Harley bit her lip, and blushed deeply. "Oh! I was obliged to part with her; I found she did not answer me at all."

"Why, how was that? I thought you valued her so highly that she was to be brought forward at the next Bible meeting as a witness against popery."

"Well — so she was," said Mrs. Harley, struggling with her embarrassment, "but — but — she left us rather suddenly, and we have not seen her since." She then took up her parasol, and moved towards the door, and Mrs. Finlay was too well bred to push her inquiries any farther.

That very day, Mrs. Dempsey came to see Alice, and from her Mrs. Finlay learned that Margaret had not left Mrs. Harley empty-handed, "for," said she, "before she went, she emptied some of the good lady's drawers, and took their contents with her."

"But where in the world is she gone to, poor, unhappy girl?"

"Oh! she's gone to 'follow the drum,' ma'am," replied the dressmaker, "the — st Regiment is gone to the West Indies, and poor Margaret with them. Captain Tandy kept her reading books that he selected for her in the library, until he quite turned her head, and then took her away with him; the Lord preserve us all in the state of grace, for when once we lose it, and cast it from us, there's no saying what we'll come to."

"Very true, Mrs. Dempsey — very true," said the lady, thoughtfully.

"But how is Alice getting on, ma'am?"

"O! fully as well as I expected, and perhaps better, too," said Mrs. Finlay, with a bright smile. "You see I'm not afraid of making you vain, Alice."

"But I'am afeard you're saying too much for me, ma'am," said Alice, her face covered with blushes. "I'm doing as well as I can, but not half as well as I'd wish. The mistress is too good to me, Mrs. Dempsey, an' even Miss Cecilia and Mr. Archy—indeed, they're all so kind that I don't feel myself amongst strangers at all."

"And your master, Alice," said Mrs. Finlay, with a meaning smile.

"Oh! well, ma'am, the master's not bad either; he's a real gentleman, I'll say that for him. If he'd only let me alone about my religion, I'd like him far better than I do." Mrs. Finlay laughed, and pushed Alice over to Mrs. Dempsey. "There, take her home with you; I'll lend her to you till Monday morning, so that she may be near the church to-morrow, and go to see her father in the afternoon."

While Mrs. Dempsey was returning thanks, Alice ran off to change her dress and put on her bonnet, and returned in a few minutes, looking as neat, Mrs. Dempsey said, as if she had just come out of a bandbox,

On their way into town Mrs. Dempsey told Alice that she began to have better hopes of Ellen, since she had heard of Margaret's woful misconduct. "I have got her to confess at last," said she, "that the way of sincerity and of obedience is the best after all, and the safest both for time and eternity. The girls, too, particularly Susan, are all doing pretty well, so that I have a great deal of comfort now, compared with what I had."

Alice was very glad to hear this, and when she

shook hands with Ellen, she could not help telling her how rejoiced she was on her account. What was her surprise when Ellen burst into tears.

"Why, what in the world ails you, Ellen?"

"Did my mother tell you about the fifteen pence?" "Well, no; what about it?" "Ah! Alice, did you never suspect anything of who it was that took it?"

"May be I did," said Alice, with a smile, "but I never spoke of it."

"I know that very well, Alice dear—well, God forgive me, it was I that took it to pay the man in the library, and besides I used to have to give Margaret a penny for every book she brought me, and I cribbed it all from my poor mother—little as she has to spare."

"Never mind, Ellen, never mind," said her mother, kindly, "I hope the like may never happen again, and you know I forgive you from my heart; so don't think any more about it. Thanks be to the Lord, our God, for the great change that has come over you in so short a time. It's to the prayers of our Blessed Lady that I set it down, for I prayed to her hard and sore to intercede for you and obtain your conversion. But, come into the work-room, Alice, while Ellen is getting our tea ready."

The girls were all delighted to see Alice, and made as much of her as though they had not seen her for months. Every one was anxious to know how she liked her new situation, and when she told how kindly she was treated, Susan cried out: "I told you so, Alice; didn't I now? Why, I declare I think you must have found a lucky cap somewhere. My stars! you ought to thank God, any how!" "So I do, Susan," said Alice, as she followed Mrs. Dempsey to the kitchen, where supper was just ready.



CHAPTER X.

I saw a youth once take a spade,
And labor all the day,
In throwing sunshine, in the shade,
Upon a stack of hay.

WHEN Alice went to the Nunnery next day, she found her father quite elated. "Why, what's the matter with you, father dear? — you're tremblin' all over."

"An' sure it's no wonder, Alice, — haven't I got a letter here in my pocket? ay, here it is, from poor Dinny. Your Uncle Harry brought it to me yesterday — an' what do you think," he added with a laugh, "amn't I down on the back of it in black and white as Mr. Cormac Riordan — so Harry tells me — bedad, it's the first time ever I was called *Mr.* any how — an' indeed it's the first letter ever Cormac got. But read it, Alice dear — read it."

By this time Alice had kissed the letter half a dozen times, and her hands trembled so that she could scarce open it. "An' so my Uncle Dinny wrote to us — do you think was it himself wrote it, father? — but I suppose it wasn't, for his eyesight is failin' him — it was Master Timmon wrote it, as sure as anything — Oh, indeed it was — for I know his handwritin' ever since he used to be settin' me my copy. Wouldn't you like to hear it again, father?"

“To be sure, Alice, to be sure—it makes me ten years younger to hear it read.”

“Well, I’ll read it for you;” and then she began —

Townland of Ballybeggan, Parish of
Drumshanahan, Sept. the 2d, 1839.

My dear brother Cormac, I send you these few lines hoping that they will find you and my dear little Alice in good health, as we are at present, thanks and praises be to God for all his mercies to us. We are all very lonesome since you left us, and myself can’t sleep e’er a night with thinking about you, and Catty is at me every day these three weeks to write to you, for she’s dreaming every night about you and Alice. You ought to make Alice write to us, for we know very well what a good scholar she is, and Master Timmon, who writes this, says that she can write and state a letter as well as e’er a one there, of her own age, he doesn’t care who the other is. So you see you have no excuse. We were every day looking for a letter from you, and Oyney has worn the soles off his new brogues going to the post office, but letter nor letter was there. We’re well on with our harvest already — the hay is all put up, and we have nearly all our reaping done, except the little field back of the garden. We’re digging potatoes every day, and they are what you may call elegant, particularly the cups, that’s just as dry as flour. Catty is going to make some linen this winter, so she’s as busy as a nailer spinning night and day. We have a great plentiness of milk now, thank God, for the big red cow calved about a month ago, and so did the black one — Bess, you know — that Alice used to milk. The Lord’s blessing on the dear child, how is she get-

ting on? Sometimes I could cry salt tears for giving my consent to your going away at all, and then when I think of all that Harry promised to do for Alice, I begin to think that it was best for you to go. Poor Father Delany was sick this time back, and we were entirely astray, for the new curate, Father Scanlan, wasn't so well acquainted with the old residents, and though he did as well as he could, and made himself quite at home like, in the stations and all, still we missed Father Delany, not but the young man is very good, but then us old people felt lonesome for his reverence that grew gray and old with ourselves, and because we didn't hear the voice that had given us comfort and instruction for many a long year — somehow we thought the altar didn't look the same, nor the chapel; but now he's better again, the Lord be praised, and he said Mass last Sunday in Ballyfin. Is it true that Harry has as much riches as they say he has, and so grand a house? I'm sure we were all uplifted when we heard of his being so well off. Tell him so, and that Father Delany, and Master Timmon, and all the old neighbors are proud and happy to hear of his welfare. Master Timmon says there wasn't a boy in his school knew Mensuration and Algebra so well. Tell Alice that Watch is well and as brisk as ever, and Oyney is growing very big — indeed, if he goes on as he's doing, he'll soon be too big for minding the cows, and must be put to something else. Master Timmon is in good health, but he doesn't serve mass any longer, for there's a young chap come to him to learn Latin, that takes that job off his hands, because he's to be a priest, and his reverence thought it better for the master to let him serve mass, so as to help him on with his Latin. The new priest, Father Scanlan, is a fine

preacher, so that we have a sermon every Sunday, now, thanks be to God. So no more at present, from your loving brother until death.

DENIS RIORDAN.

When Alice got through with the letter, her father wiped his eyes with the cuff of his coat. "Bless my soul, Alice!" said he, "can't Master Timmon state a letter well — why, you'd think it was out of a book. An' so poor Father Delany was sick — but he's over it now, I hope, an' they've got a new curate. Oh, indeed, it was full time, for his reverence wasn't able to do all himself, now that old age is comin' on him — even though the parish is so small. I'll tell you what I was thinkin', Alice."

"What's that, father?"

"Why, if you could come in for an hour or so some day next week, we'd just write home. The nuns will give us pen, ink, an' paper — for Sister Carroll told me so — you can tell your mistress about what you're goin' to do, an' she'll give you leave to stay a little longer on that account."

"Oh, indeed, it's herself that will, father, for she's one of the best ladies that ever was in the world. I'll come on Wednesday or Thursday, with the help of God."

"Well! but tell me this, Alice — did the master say anything to you yet about religion?"

"Did he say anything?" cried Alice, "Oh, then, indeed, short a time as I'm in it I've stood many a siege from him, Didn't he want to make me go in to worship, as he called it, every night with them, though the most of the same worship is nothing else but runnin' down the Catholic religion, and talkin' hard of the Pope, an' every thing that way, Even the Blessed Virgin, he

couldn't let alone, but had a rap at her, too, an' said she was made a god of—or a goddess, I think he said. An' what do you think, father, because I was sayin' *my own* prayers all the time into myself an' had my beads in my hand, didn't he snap them from me an' throw them into the fire,—ay, indeed, cross an' all."

"The Lord save us!" said Cormac, "don't they beat the devil all out—so I hope you didn't go in any more to their worship?"

"You may swear that, father, I got enough of their worship—if it isn't the funny worship all out. At first the master threatened to put me away, but I told him I didn't care, he might if he liked—an' then he cooled down, an' said he'd let me have my own way for a little while, hopin' that I'd do better by an' by. But the fun of it was, that when Bridget, the other Catholic girl that's in it, heard that, she said she wouldn't go in to worship any more, for that when I got leave to stay out the master couldn't 'make fish of one and flesh of the other'—sure enough, he looked as if he could eat us both on the spot, but he didn't say 'yes,' 'ay,' or 'no,' only ordered us out of the room. So now Bridget an' myself says our Rosary, an' our Litany, an' all together in the kitchen, while the rest are up at worship. But I think it's time for me to be on the move, father."

"Well, God bless you, child, an' give you grace to do what's right."

So Alice led her father back to the bench where he had been sitting in the open air, and then bid him good-by.

As she tripped lightly down the long avenue, she turned back more than once to look at her father, and some others of the old men who

sat with him, and she thought they must all be very happy there—shut in by the convent walls from the noisy world without—all their wants so carefully provided for, without any trouble to themselves—even to the chapel, as she said to herself, “in the very house with them—an’ how nice it is for them long benches to be put there for them in the fine summer days, that they can come out an’ sit in the fresh air, an’ hear the birds sing, and look at the trees an’ flowers all around them—ah! but *my* poor father can’t see them—God help him—well! but he can smell them, an’ that’s a great comfort, too,”

Thns soliloquizing, she quitted the convent grounds, and passed into the street. The sun was already approaching the top of the mountain which forms the background to the city of Montreal, so Alice found it necessary to hasten her steps, so as to get to Mrs. Dempsey’s before the light began to grow dim.

In the course of the evening Alice told Mrs. Dempsey the story of the old gentleman reading the newspaper in church, but though she laughed heartily, she was not so much surprised as Alice had expected.

“Oh, that’s nothing strange, Alice!” said she, as soon as she could speak for laughing.

“No?” said Alice, her mouth and eyes wide open with astonishment! “Why, Lord bless me, Mrs. Dempsey! wasn’t it the quarest thing in the world to see any one readin’ a newspaper in church—doesn’t every one go there to pray to God? an’ it’s only their prayer books they ought to be readin’.”

“Of course, Alice, of course. Our Lord himself tells us in the Holy Scripture that his house is the house of prayer, but for all that there’s

many among the Protestants that go there only for appearances, and because it's the fashion to go to church once in the week. They haven't the same devotion that Catholics have, and how could they? What have they in their meeting-houses to remind the people that they *are* in God's holy house?—now with us it's entirely different—if our thoughts might chance to wander for a while we have only to raise our eyes, and whichever side we turn, we see something to put us in mind where we are—the altar, where the priest is offering up the great sacrifice, the crucifix with the image of our dear suffering Saviour, or the pictures or statues of the Saints that set us such examples in their holy lives, and who now reign with God—ah! it's no wonder that Catholics are more attentive and devout in church than other people; the only wonder is how any one *can* be distracted or heedless in a Catholic church. I have heard of even very bad, obscene books being found in pews in Protestant places of worship; so the reading of a newspaper doesn't at all surprise me.”

The evening passed pleasantly and quietly away, and Alice was really glad to see that Ellen joined in the Rosary and other prayers with much feeling and recollection.

The tardy sun of November's last days was scarcely above the horizon on Monday morning when Alice was wending her way up to Sherbrooke Street, yet early as it was she found Cecilia and Archy preparing for school.

“O Alice!” said Cecilia, as soon as she caught sight of her, “I'm glad you've come home so early, for you have quite a job before you to-day. Mamma wants you to help her with a new pelisse that she's making for me, and it must be ready

by six o'clock this evening. I'm to help, too, when I get back from school."

"Why, are you going any place this evening, Miss Cecilia?"

"O dear, yes! we're all going to the Bible meeting in Coté Street Church—the Hawleys are going, and the Belmonts, and every one, and I wouldn't for anything that my new pelisse shouldn't be ready."

"Well, I'll do my best, Miss," said Alice, "but where's that you said the meeting was to be?"

"In Coté Street Church, I tell you again."

"In Coté Street Church—what sort of a church is that?" said Alice.

"Oh! I don't know," replied Cecilia shortly. "It isn't the church we belong to, so I don't know anything about it, only that it is called Coté Street Church, and that the Rev. Mr. Stirthemup preaches there. You know it's to a meeting *we're* going there—a great meeting against popery, and papa says that all good Protestants must go, no matter what sect they belong to—for you know we're all protesting against your nasty, superstitious vulgar old Romish Church,"

"Thank you, miss," said Alice, very quietly, "I know that already. But isn't it a queer thing to be having meetings in a church. Aren't there places enough to have them in besides there? I suppose you call the church the house of God—but, my goodness, I was forgettin' altogether—sure it's meetin' houses is the name of *your* churches. Oh! that's the reason why you have the meetin' there. I know now. A meetin' house means, to be sure, a house that meetings are held in,"

"You are a pert, saucy little minx, to talk so of our churches," cried Cecilia, angrily. "I'm sure

they are not to be compared to *your* old churches, with your crosses and images, and all such stuff."

"Well!" said Alice, "there's one thing to be said for *our* old churches, as you call them, no one ever thinks of readin' newspapers in them — eh, Miss Cecilia?"

Here Mrs. Finlay entered the room, and Cecilia forgot all about the churches, in that far greater interest of hurrying on the new pelisse. Mrs. Finlay sent Alice to the kitchen to get breakfast, and then set her down to work, saying with a smile: "As soon as Mr. Finlay is gone, I shall come myself, Alice, as you require my superintendence. Cecilia would never forgive us if between us we spoiled her new silk pelisse. Come now to breakfast, my daughter."

Mr. Finlay came home earlier that day than usual, and very soon after Bridget and Alice were summoned up stairs. "Why, what's in the wind now, does any one think?" said Bridget, as they went up together.

"Not a know I know," was Alice's reply. "But I hope it's nothing bad, at any rate." Indeed, it was not anything bad, for it was no less than to get new shawls and bonnets which had just come from town — presents from the master. That gentleman himself had got in soon after the parcels, and he was now in his very best humor, talking quite jocosely with his wife.

"Girls!" said Mrs. Finlay, with a smile, "your master has been thinking of you to-day in town. Here's a new bonnet and a new shawl for each of you. He is so kind as to make you a present of them."

Alice was taken altogether by surprise, and so was Bridget, too, for neither of them had ever dreamed of getting a present — and such a pres-

ent — from Mr. Finlay, who seldom bestowed such favors on Catholics. It was with considerable embarrassment that they both got out their thanks, and each made her lowest courtesy. "Thank you most kindly, sir," said one, and "Long life to you, Mr. Finlay! may the Lord prosper you and yours!" said the other, and both stood looking at the pretty new articles in their hands, at a loss to know whether to go or stay.

"You will both be ready to go into town this evening," said Mr. Finlay, very gently. "I have told a cabman to come for you at six o'clock. There is to be a most interesting meeting this evening, and Mrs. Finlay will give you both leave to go hear the speeches, and see the fine ladies and gentlemen."

Bridget was just going to say, "Thank you, sir, we'll be ready." But Alice went over to a table and laid down the bonnet and shawl.

"What are you doing there, Alice?" inquired Mrs. Finlay.

"I can't take the things, ma'am," was the answer.

"And why not?"

"Why, you see, ma'am, it's to dress up for the meetin' that the master gave them to us, an' I'll not go, so I suppose I'm not to have the clothes."

"But what is to hinder you from going?" demanded Mr. Finlay.

"Because, sir, the meetin' is to be in a church, an' we're not allowed to go into your churches, good, bad, or indifferent."

"Who told you the meeting was to be in a church, pray?"

"Miss Cecilia, sir, an' besides it's a Bible meetin' an' no Catholic goes to such meetings at all."

"More shame for them, girl. Do you know why they do not go?"

"Well, no, sir" — said Alice thoughtfully — "except it is that they don't want to hear themselves an' their religion made little of."

Mrs. Finlay laughed, and looked archly at her husband. "Not a bad reason either — eh, Charles?"

Mr. Finlay colored to the very eyes. "But can you not try for once, child?" he said, making an effort to keep calm. "If you hear anything that you don't like, you need not go again — that is all."

Alice shook her head in silence, whereupon Mr. Finlay waxed wroth, and told his wife to put away the things. "But of course *you* will go?" he said to Bridget.

"No, sir, I don't intend it. Little Alice here has more book larnin' than I have, God help me! so when *she* thinks it's not a fit place for us, I'll not go."

"Then you are content to lose these presents which I had intended for you."

"Why, if we were dead, Mr. Finlay, they wouldn't be much use to us, though I'll not deny but they're very purty, an' I'd like well to have them. But then, as I said before, if it's to bribe us to go against our religion, we'll have nothing to say to them."

"Then you refuse my presents?"

Both girls quailed before the angry countenance of their master, and Alice did not attempt to reply. "We're not refusin' them, sir," said Bridget, timidly. "We're just as much obleeged to you as if we took them, but we don't want to go to the meetin' — that's all. If you mane us to take them without goin', we will, an' thank you most kindly, too."

"Go along down stairs, both of you!" cried Mr. Finlay. "I have a very great mind to turn you out of the house this instant. Go off, I say!"

The command was scarcely uttered when it was obeyed, and Mr. Finlay, snatching the rejected presents, flung them to the other end of the room, in a passion. "These papists are the plague of my life," said he. "I know not how it is that I am prevailed upon to have them about me—it is all but impossible to enlighten them, so dogged are they in adhering to the old, bigoted, superstitious teachings of their cunning masters—the priests!"

Mrs. Finlay could have easily answered that he could, if he wished, spare himself all the trouble of which he complained, but, seeing him so chafed and disturbed, she prudently forbore to express what she thought. So she called in Cecilia to fit on the waist of her pelisse, and then asked her husband's opinion on some other subject with which she pretended to be engrossed.

Just at that moment a carriage stopped at the door, and almost before it had time to be opened, Archy bounded in, shouting, "Oh! papa! papa! who do you think has come—why, Uncle Edward—here he is—here he is."

The gentleman thus announced quickly made his appearance, and was greeted with the warmest affection. Mrs. Finlay throwing her arms around his neck, kissed him with all a sister's fondness, while even Mr. Finlay's face brightened into a smile, as he shook hands with the stranger. Then Cecilia jumped up and caught her uncle by the neck with such fervor that he laughingly cried, as he pressed her to his heart: "Take care little one—take care!—another such hug as that would go far to strangle Uncle Ned."

All was joy and bustle, for Mr. Wilmot had been some three years away in one of the Southern States, where the bright waters of the Gulf of Mexico lay stretched before his home, and he was now come to pay a long-promised visit to his sister and her family. Dinner was very soon announced, and while it was going forward, Mr. Finlay told his brother-in-law that they were all going to a Bible meeting.

“Oh! certainly *I* must stay at home, Charles!” said Mrs. Finlay. “You surely would not have me leave Edward all alone here the very first evening he is with us.”

“But consider, Harriet,” said her husband, gravely — “consider what you will lose by absenting yourself from a meeting so interesting. Why, there is the Rev. Mr. Sleek, who has been eight years laboring amongst the Sandwich Islanders, — he is to give us many interesting details concerning that most important mission. And you know Mr. McCrea, who has lately recanted the errors of popery, is also to entertain us with a discourse on the baneful system of Rome. And then what an example it would be for *you* to absent yourself on such an occasion.”

“So you’re going to have a Bible meeting!” cried Wilmot. “By Jove! Harriet, you must go, and I’ll go too. I’ve never been at one, and I should like to go, of all things!” Mrs. Finlay said something about his being fatigued.

“Fatigued!” he exclaimed, gayly laughing, “who talks of fatigue when a Bible meeting is to be attended? For shame, Harriet! would you turn away from the path of godliness — you, the wife of Charles Finlay? I’ll lay a wager, I’ll keep my eyes open longer than any one in the place. Come — come — I wouldn’t lose such an opportunity — no, not for the President’s chair.”

Mr. Finlay looked somewhat grave, but he could not openly demur against the other's manner of speaking, so he left the room in silence to order the carriage.

While Mr. Finlay was gone, his wife related to her brother the defeat which Mr. Finlay had recently sustained in his contest with the girls. Wilmot laughed heartily. "Upon my honor," said he, "your girls are almost a match for Charles; a few more lessons like that may teach him to respect the religious opinions of his servants. What a pity that he has got bitten by this anti-popery mania; he who used to be, and still is, in other respects, a sensible, right-thinking man."

The young people had left the room before their father, in order to make their toilet, so that Mr. Wilmot was under no restraint in expressing his opinion. "If Charles," he resumed, "had lived as long amongst Catholics as I have, he would not be so bitter against themselves or their religion. But here he comes. Hillo, old fellow! Ready for the meeting, eh?"

"Yes," said Mr. Finlay, "all is now ready. You had better go and muffle, Harriet, for the carriage will be round in a moment."

Mrs. Finlay obeyed. In a few minutes she returned with Archy and Cecilia, fully equipped for the drive, and in a few minutes more the carriage rolled away from the door.

About half-past nine the door-bell rang loudly, and two or three of the servants ran up into the hall to ascertain the cause of the alarm, for they did not expect the family home so early. When the door was opened, Mr. Wilmot supported Mrs. Finlay up the steps, and placed her on one of the hall chairs, for she was scarcely able to walk a step. Cecilia busied herself in untying her

mamma's bonnet, and sent Bridget up stairs for a bottle of sal volatile. Neither Mr. Finlay nor his son was to be seen.

"Why, ma'am, dear! what's the matter?" said Alice, her face pale with apprehension. "What's come over you at all — an' you so well when you went out?"

Mrs. Finlay only shook her head and smiled faintly. "Mamma was taken suddenly ill at the meeting," said Cecilia. "The place was so excessively warm, she fell back nearly fainting, before we knew anything about it."

"I think you are somewhat better now, my dear Harriet," said her brother; "I wish you would let me take you up stairs, for there is a regular current of air here that will do you no good — come!"

"O! I'll just go into the parlor, Edward," said Mrs. Finlay, making an effort to sit up; "I *do* feel much better." So she took hold of her brother's arm and moved into the breakfast room, which was the nearest.

"Lord bless me, Bridget," said Alice, as they went down stairs together, "didn't it come on her very suddenly? an' she looked so bad; my goodness, she's just like a corpse. I'm sure I'm heart sorry to see her so much pulled down."

"God relieve her," responded Bridget, "for she seems to have a great pain about her heart, by the way she puts her hand on it every now an' then."

It was nearly an hour after, when Mr. Finlay and his son got home. They came in a cab, and the instant the door was opened Archy asked how was his mother, and where she was. On being told, he ran to her and kissed her. "Dear, dear mamma," said he, "I was so sorry when papa

would have me stay with him, instead of coming home with you — but, indeed, indeed, my heart was with you!" and he could say no more, for the tears were choking him, and he ran away for fear of "making a baby of himself crying," as he afterwards said.

Mr. Finlay asked, very coldly, how his wife did, and on hearing that she was somewhat better, "Your indisposition," said he, "was exceedingly out of time. Mr. McCrea was just in the midst of a most interesting account of the superstitious practices carried on in the north of Ireland, on a small island in Lough Derg, when the whole house was thrown into excitement by your fall. Really, Harriet, I was exceedingly annoyed, and then nothing would serve Archibald but he must rush from the platform, just as though he could do you any good."

"Fortunately," said Wilmot, with keen irony, "fortunately, *you* prevented him from so far committing himself, and still more fortunately my sister had one near who was not engrossed by the delectable revelations of the reverend apostate."

"O, Edward! Edward!" said Mrs. Finlay, reproachfully.

"No matter, Harriet," said her husband, "I can understand and forgive Edward's observation. But I lament beyond expression, my dear Wilmot, to see that you do not enter into the spirit of our longing desire to overthrow this fell system of popery, which is the greatest bane of modern society."

"Certainly I do not see the matter as you do," replied Wilmot. "I profess no extraordinary love for the Catholic Church, and there are some of her doctrines which I cannot approve; yet still I know very well that she teaches all the

fundamental truths of Christianity. I see her children everywhere leading good and virtuous lives; that is, where they *do* live according to her teachings. I find them good and faithful friends — obliging neighbors — industrious, honest men of business — patriotic and public-spirited citizens, and as Christians, unrivalled in their devotion to God and respect for the things that appertain to him. I believe that they go to heaven if they do as their church teaches, and I have no patience with these humbugging societies, whose avowed purpose is the conversion of Catholics. I say, Charles Finlay, and I always shall say, that you proselytizing gentlemen and ladies had better leave Catholics to go to heaven their own way, for I don't see that you can succeed in bringing them over to yours. Did you ever hear what Henry of Navarre said, when he had made up his mind to become a Catholic? ”

“ No — what was it? ”

“ Why, he first assembled the Protestant ministers, and asked whether they thought salvation was to be had in the Catholic Church. After long and serious deliberation, they answered in the affirmative. The monarch then summoned an assembly of the Catholic bishops, and put the same question to them. ‘ Why, certainly,’ said they, ‘ not only is salvation to be had within her pale, but there is no salvation out of it.’ ”

“ ‘ In that case,’ said Henri Quatre, ‘ I'll take the safe side.’ So he at once became a Catholic. There is a similar case on record regarding the wife of the Emperor Charles VI. — a princess of Wolfenbuttel. When the young prince proposed for her, it was on the condition that she should become a Catholic — as he would not marry a Protestant. She forthwith called a coun-

cil of ministers, and asked if it was possible to save one's soul in the Catholic Church. After much consultation they said, 'Yes.' 'Well, then,' said the princess, 'the Catholic Church holds that there is no salvation beyond her communion, so where there are two roads, it is for the traveller to choose the safest.' Next day she was baptized, and her father very soon followed her example. What do you say to these instances, Charles Finlay?"

"Poh! poh!" said Mr. Finlay, "what do they prove? That the Church of Rome was as arrogant in her assumptions then as she is now. What do *you* say to their worship of the Virgin and of all Saints, as they say themselves?"

"Fudge, Charles! all fudge! they just worship the Virgin, and all the rest, as much as you or I do. Why, my worthy fellow, no enlightened, sensible Protestant thinks of bringing such a charge against Catholics in our part of the world. Catholics *pray* to the Virgin, and to the Saints to *intercede* for them—you'll never find them asking them to *grant* them anything of themselves, but only to ask it for them of Almighty God. Just as you or I would employ the credit of a friend at court if we wanted a favor from the sovereign."

"Well, indeed, uncle, that's true," said Cecilia, who had listened very attentively, "I have often heard our Catholic servants at their prayers, and when they pray to the Blessed Virgin they always ask her to pray for them, and now I think of it, that shows that they do *not* make her equal to God, when they only ask her to intercede with him who was her Son on earth."

"And is still her Son in heaven, my child," said her mother, mildly, "the connection never can be

dissolved, and hence it is that Catholics call Mary the Mother of God — really, I must confess that it seems very natural, and even proper to invoke her intercession, since she must have the very greatest influence at the court of heaven, to follow up Edward's similitude."

"Yes!" cried her husband, testily, "but how can she, or any other mere *creature*, hear the prayers that are addressed to them in every part of the world. I thought," he added, with an ironical smile, "that ubiquity was one of the divine attributes — but papists suppose it to be common to all the Saints in their Calendar."

"As to that," said Mr. Wilmot, "we are told that 'there is joy in heaven upon one sinner's doing penance.' I suppose Catholics infer from that, and well they may, that the Saints reigning with God are fully cognizant of all that passes on earth. And then I have heard them in controversial discourses bring forward that passage from the Apocalypse wherein St. John describes the angel offering to the Most High 'the prayers of the Saints in a golden censer.' But, hang it, I don't think there's any of us desirous of studying Catholic doctrines — only let us mind our own religious affairs, and leave them to do the same; that's my notion. After all the furious cannonading of your Bible Societies, and Tract Societies, and Missionary Societies, and what not, I don't see that you gain much ground — in fact, not a single inch — the old bishop at Rome wears his tiara just as jauntily, and sits as firmly on his pontifical chair as any one of his predecessors, and to all appearance, his successor will do the same, so I'm strongly inclined to think that your labor is about as productive as that of the sage individual who set about washing the blackamoor white. Look

now — there are two pair of young eyes closing, and poor Harry here has been sitting up too long. Hillo, Archy! show Uncle Ned to his room, will you?"

Then bidding all a kind "good night," he left the room.

That night, before Mrs. Finlay went to sleep she called Alice to her bedside, and whispered —

"Alice, will you remember me in your prayers to-night?"

"Oh, then, indeed, I will, ma'am," said Alice, joyfully, "and I've never forgotten you in my prayers since the day I saw you first."

"Go, then, and pray that God may show me the light of truth. Go, for here's Mr. Finlay coming."

"What are you doing here?" said Mr. Finlay, in a sharp tone, as he met her at the door.

"I was up with a drink for the mistress, sir."

"Well — go down stairs at once. No eaves-dropping here! mind that."

"Sir?"

"No listening, I tell you. Away with you to the kitchen."

"May God forgive you, Mr. Finlay!" murmured Alice to herself, as she quickly descended the stairs.

Next morning, Mrs. Finlay was still very poorly, and unable to leave her bed, and Mr. Finlay stayed at home on account of Wilmot. Just before breakfast, as they were returning from a short walk, they were passing a small room on the first floor, where the young people usually kept their school-books, etc., and hearing Archy talking quite loud, Mr. Finlay said: "Let us stop to hear him; he is reciting some of his lessons aloud."

They had barely listened a moment when it

became sufficiently evident that Archy was *not* reciting a lesson, and just as evident that he was very much engrossed with what he was about, for though his father pushed the door a little open, he did not perceive it.

Peal after peal of girlish laughter rang through the room, and the cause was very plain. There was Master Archy mounted on a table, a long coat of his father's girded around him, on his neck a white pocket-handkerchief, tied in cravat fashion — his, dark, silken hair brushed up off his forehead in a peculiar sort of style, and he pouring out, with the most comical gesticulations, a violent tirade against popery. Cecilia and Alice were the sole auditory, the latter being at work in the room, and it was not the least amusing part of the proceedings to hear Archy, every now and then, address himself to Alice: —

“Why do you laugh so, you little superstitious, ignorant, idolatrous papist; you bedevilled, blind-folded young Romanist? mind your work, I say; don't you know I'm the Rev. Jedediah Higginbottom!”

Here Wilmot could restrain himself no longer, but burst into a loud laugh, clapping his hands and crying: “Well done, upon my honor!” Archy dropped his hands, and looked towards the door with a face of pale dismay, but before he could spring from the table, his father caught him by the neck. “You are — are you? Well, Mr. Jedediah Higginbottom, I shall teach you to mock God's holy people; come down, sir!” he sternly added, “down instantly.”

So enraged was Mr. Finlay that Wilmot could scarcely get him persuaded to commute Archy's punishment into a day's confinement to his own room. But after long and urgent entreaty, he at

length succeeded, and the sham preacher was sent up stairs in disgrace.

“There now,” said Mr. Wilmot, “that’s the glorious fruit of taking the boy to your meetings; you see the whole thing strikes his young mind as irresistibly ludicrous. But come; I want to see how Harriet is this morning.”





CHAPTER XI.

"Thy face is very fair, thine eyes are mild,
But duties on thine arduous path are piled."

"Few, save the poor, feel for the poor,
The rich know not how hard
It is to be of needful food
And needful rest debarred."—L. E. L.

FOUR changeful, checkered years had passed away. Alice Riordan had grown up into a tall, graceful-looking girl—her fair, childish features had developed themselves into a countenance of rare beauty, expressive of the calm and thoughtful character of her mind, though at the same time almost infantile in its look of innocence and candor. Her hair had somewhat changed its color, and its darkened hue contrasted well with the snowy brow over which it was so smoothly braided. You might travel for a long summer's day and not meet so pretty a girl as Alice Riordan, with her sweet, downcast eyes, her peachy cheeks, and her silky auburn hair. She had left Mrs. Finlay about a year before, or rather that lady left her, for the family had gone to Scotland, and Alice would not consent to leave her father. So she had hired two small rooms, furnished them with the money which had lain over in the Savings Bank, and took her father out of the Asylum, where he had so long been a con-

tented inmate. Time had dealt kindly by our Cormac, and the only change visible upon him was the sprinkling of gray through his jet-black hair. His cheek was still as florid, and his smile as gay, and his step as firm as on the day when Alice bade him farewell for the first time in the hall of the Gray Nunnery. Yet though those four years had flown away almost imperceptibly — so calm — so peaceful — and so free from care, yet Cormac had ever looked forward to the time when his own Alice should again guide his steps, and cater for his wants. Not that he was ungrateful for the comfortable home that Almighty God had provided for him, — not that he did not fully appreciate its numerous advantages, but his daughter was the centre of his earthly hopes, — and he would rather endure more hardship, and suffer more privation to be with her, who was truly “the staff of his old age.” To her he looked for all the comfort he desired on earth, and he had never ceased to pray that God would give his darling child the means of taking him to live with herself.

Harry Malone and his wife were still the same, but not so with the compact about staying from church, which had been long ago dissolved, “the gude man” stoutly insisting on his authority to annul it, “for,” said he, “Lizzy, it’s a burning shame before God and man not to show our face among Christians even on a Sunday. By the powers! I’ll not stand it any longer, so there’s no use in talking. If I’m a living man I’ll be in the Regalie next Sunday. I see you’re getting angry, but you needn’t, Lizzy, for I’ll do what I say this time.”

“Well, Mr. Harry Malone,” said his wife, “if that’s the way with you now, I suppose I

must follow your good example, God bless the mark!—and go to my own church—you'll not have it for nothing."

"You may if you like," responded Harry, "and much good may it do you. It's folly to talk, Lizzy, but I know my own know any how. What church are you going to, if a body may make so free as to ask?"

"Why, to tell you the truth, Harry, I'm a little puzzled about that same thing. My father was a Presbyterian, and an elder into the bargain, but then my poor dear mother belonged to the Methodist church. Before I was married I used to go to the Congregational church up here off the Champ de Mars,—and I got to like their ways well enough. I'm sure I don't know which to go to now," she added, knitting her brows and fixing her eyes in what is called a brown study.

"I'm sorry I can't advise you, Lizzy dear," said the husband, "if you could only know the difference that's between them all,—I mean what each of them believes—then you might make your choice."

"Oh! as to the difference," replied the wife, "they're all nearly the same. I don't care a straw about that, but whether I am to stick to my father's religion, or my mother's, or the one I had myself in my young days—that's the question."

"I'll tell you what, Lizzy," said Harry, laughing, "the best thing you can do is to take *mine*. Sure amn't I as near to you, at any rate, as either father or mother, and what's more I'm living still—so as one alive is worth two dead, just, in the name of God, come with me—we'll take a pew in the Regalie, and you'll see how snug we'll be. Blood alive, woman, wouldn't it be a pity to see *you* jogging off on Sunday morning away up to

Champ de Mars, and poor Harry going all alone to the Regalie? When you can't make up your mind about the others, just come with me."

At first, Lizzy shook her head — then she mused for a while — then she shook her head again — "mightn't I say the same to you, Harry? — couldn't you as well come with me?"

"Oh! bedad no, Lizzy, that would *never* do! You see it's not the same case with me at all. There never was one of my family on either side, since the wars of Ireland, or long before, that was anything else but Catholics, and though myself is not much given to religion, yet I know very well that it wouldn't be safe to be anything else *but* a Catholic, seeing that there's only one church, and can be no other — for Christ didn't found any but the one, and of course as I'm in it, I'll not be foolish enough to leave it."

"Well," said Lizzy, after a short silence — "suppose I do consent to go with you to mass, I needn't go to confession, — or fast, or any such thing unless I like — so it's all one — I may as well go to one church as to another, and of course it's only right for man and wife to go together. So I'll go — that's settled."

Such was the new and characteristic arrangement entered into between Harry and his wife, and they carried it out bravely, although religion had little or nothing to do in the matter, it being simply a question of decorum on the one side, and of convenience on the other. Latterly, however, Father Smith had got Harry prevailed upon to go to his duty, and at Easter time he was seen two or three times sitting waiting at one of the confessionals, and duly received his paschal communion. Lizzy, however, had still stoutly asserted the Protestant principle of "no confession," and

though she went regularly once every Sunday to church, yet in point of fact she was still as un-Catholic as ever. To be sure she said she had turned, and even professed to have got over all her old prejudices against the priests and other popish matters, but still she could not submit to "confess her sins to one that was just flesh and blood like herself," and would never be brought to admit that the Eucharist was "what Catholics took it to be — not she, indeed." She had some qualms, too, about praying to Saints, and in fact went very awkwardly about it when she did attempt it.

To do them both justice they had long ago forgiven Cormac and his daughter, and when they heard that Alice was going to commence business on her own account, they did all they could to prevail upon her to come back to live with them. But to this Alice would not, by any means, consent; she was quite rejoiced to be again on good terms with her uncle and aunt. "But now," said she, "that I'm able to earn for my father, I must try and do it, with God's assistance. You know, aunt, Mrs. Dempsey has promised to get me two or three good customers, and Mrs. Finlay the same, so that I have a very good prospect before me, and if I let this opportunity slip it might not turn up again. No — no, I have a little place taken over in Sanguinet Street, and we're to go there on Monday morning. Mrs. Finlay and them all set out yesterday — may the Lord bless them wherever they go — and just look what the mistress put into my hand after she had paid me my wages and all."

"Why, I declare, Alice, but that's great — a five-dollar bill, besides your wages. And then the beautiful new dress into the bargain. Upon my credit, you're a lucky girl."

"But tell me this, Alice," said her uncle — "how did you get along with Mr. Finlay so well as you did? Your father often told me about the way he used to be at you at first about your religion."

"Oh! as to that," replied Alice, with a smile, "when he found he could make nothing of me, he cooled down all of a sudden, and after the first six months or so he never said a word to me about my religion. So far from that, he used to send Bridget and myself into town in the back seat of the carriage, or sleigh, or whatever it might be, on Sunday mornings when the weather was bad — you know Master Archy and Miss Cecilia used to come into Sunday School, and the master, as I told you, sent us in to church and then we waited in town till they were going home again, so that we never had to wet our feet either coming or going. Between ourselves, Mr. Finlay never was black against Catholics after Mr. Wilmot's visit."

"No — and who was Mr. Wilmot, Alice?"

"Oh! he was a brother of Mrs. Finlay's, that came to see them from some far-away place in the States. He wasn't the least bigoted against us, — and he used to reason cases with the master, and laugh him out of it, until he made him ashamed, I think, of trying to make Catholics turn. At any rate we had a far better time of it after Mr. Wilmot was there. But what do you think the master did when they were parting me?"

"Well! I'm sure I can't guess — what did he do?"

"Why, when I went in to bid him and the mistress good-by, he said to me: 'Alice, you have been a just and faithful servant to us, and Catholic though you be, I think it my duty to give you some substantial proof of my approbation,' and he pointed to a parcel that was on the table; it con-

tained a whole suit of clothes for my father — good, warm clothes — bran new from the tailor. What do you think of that, uncle?"

"I think," replied honest Harry with his usual bluntness, "that only you deserved it you wouldn't get it — that's the chat. Not but it speaks well for the goodness of your master and mistress, but all the time, what I said before I say again," and he nodded complacently at his pretty niece, who was just then called out by her aunt to help her to get the tea.

The following Monday was a great day for Alice and her father. Early in the morning the young dressmaker went to work in tidying up the rooms, and very proud she was when her furniture was all arranged, particularly a nice high-back arm chair covered with chintz calico, which her uncle had given her and which she intended for her father. She had two good bedsteads, bedding and all, and several other articles of furniture, but the arm-chair was her greatest treasure, and one of the happiest moments in her life was that when she led her father up stairs, and seated him in it. "There now, father," said she, "that's your chair — Uncle Harry bought it on purpose for you. Isn't it a very comfortable one?"

"Comfortable!" said Cormac, as he established himself in the chair, "why, Alice dear, the king might sit in it."

"I'm glad you like it, father," said Alice, "and here I'm putting up a nice little rack near your bed to hang your clothes on. Please God, we'll get on well now, for I am promised plenty of work. We'll have to get a stove before the winter comes on, but you know I've ten dollars yet of my wages, besides the five dollars that Mrs. Finlay gave me, so I have enough in my hands to get the

stove any time, and the sooner we have it, it will be all the better, for until then I'll have to cook our victuals down stairs in Mrs. Brady's kitchen."

That very day Alice went out to see about the stove, and having selected one in a hardware store, she proposed to bring her uncle to look at it, as she was no great judge of such things. The stove, however, was not to be bought as soon as she calculated, for as the old proverb says *there is many a slip between the cup and the lip*.

Towards evening Alice proposed to her father that they should walk over to her uncle's to ask him to look at the stove, and they sallied forth accordingly, but had not gone very far when they came full against a poor, sickly-looking man standing begging at a door with his hat off. He had been refused, it would seem, and Alice's heart was touched by the tone in which he replied: "Och, then, if you only knew the way I'm situated, ma'am, you wouldn't grudge me a copper, indeed you wouldn't." But independent of the mournful pathos of the tone, there was that in the man's accent that went to Alice's heart, ay, and her father's, too. "He's a poor Irishman, father," said Alice. "God help him! he seems in sore need."

"Yes, but, Alice, didn't we hear that same voice before now?" exclaimed Cormac.

"Well, indeed you'll drink before me, father, for I was going to put the same question to you; I surely did hear that man's voice before, — let us have a look at him." When they went nearer to the poor man he reached out his hand to them, for that time the door was shut against him. "One copper for the love of God!" said he, and he could say no more, for his heart was full.

"Honest man," said Alice, after looking into his face — didn't you come out here in the ship Dublin about five years ago?"

"Well, indeed, I did," said the poor mendicant — "an' it was the black day for me when I left the ould sod — ochone! Oh! But who are *you*, Miss, that seems to know me?"

"Your name is Barney Dolan — is it not?"

"Why, then, sure enough that was my name when I was at myself. God, he knows, I'm neither one thing nor the other now, only a poor, sickly crature, that's a burden to every one. But who in the world are you?"

"Ah, then, Barney, my poor man! don't you remember me?" said Cormac, speaking in a husky tone, for his heart was touched.

"Och, musha, but it's myself that does," cried Barney, who had not before looked at Cormac. "Why, then, man alive, I'm overjoyed to see you lookin' so well." And the poor fellow really seemed quite exhilarated — "an' is this your little daughter — bad scran to the bit, but she's a big girl now — taller than you or I. My sarvice to you, Miss, why, in troth, I'm uplifted to see you both so well dressed, an' in such good health — the more every one hasn't the same story to tell," and Barney forced a smile as he glanced down over his ragged habiliments and shrunken limbs.

After a rapid consultation between the father and daughter, the former invited Barney to go home with them. "Well, but if I do," said he, "you'll walk on a little before me, for I'm not a very creditable companion at the present time."

"No — no, Barney — no, no," said Cormac — "come on *with* us — when we get home, you'll

tell us about your son — whether he's livin' or dead, or what's come of him."

"Oh! then, indeed, he's alive an' well, glory be to God for that same," replied Barney, as they all three moved on together — "if I could only get to *him* I'd never know a day's hardship."

"Why, where is he?" said Alice.

"He left me two years ago, to go to work on a canal somewhere in the state of New York, away up near a place they call Buffalo. I was in good employment here at the time, an' didn't want to leave it, so he went his lone, — Oh, bedad if I was near Phil, I'd count myself well off."

"Do you ever hear from him?"

"Hear from him, is it? — Oh, then, it's myself that did hear from him here about two months ago, an' he sent me four dollars to take me up to where he is, though he has a wife and two little ones to support. Well! I was in great hopes you may be sure, and was gettin' ready as fast as I could: but as ill-luck would have it, I got a fall one day down on the wharf, where I was helpin' to load a ship, an' I had to be carried to my lodgin'. For five long weeks I was stretched on my bed, scarce able to turn, an' when I got able to walk about all my little pennies was gone, an' I had nothing for it but to go look for my bit an' sup from the stranger, bekase I wasn't able to work a stroke of any kind. "Well!" he concluded with a heavy sigh, "what can't be cured must be endured — it's little thought I had leavin' home that it's beggin' I'd be in America, but then, I suppose it's God's will — only He laid it out for me I wouldn't have to do it, so there's no use in frettin' about it, though to tell you the truth, honest man, there's times when I could sit an' cry like

a child when I see myself forced to ask a charity — Oh! it's a hard thing — a hard thing to have it to do — God he sees that!"

"Well! well! Barney," said Cormac, "don't fret any more about it — come home with us now, an' with God's help we'll give you a lift out of your distress. Come an' have your supper with us at any rate, an' then we can talk it all over at our leisure."

When supper was over Alice took up her work, and the two men sat down side by side to have a *shanachus*, as they said themselves. Many a reminiscence of old Ireland was lovingly and sorrowfully told, as each in turn unlocked the storehouse of his memory, and from some one of "the countless chambers of the brain" brought forth the treasured memories of "the deeds of the days of other years" — the dark-brown shadows of the past. And Alice listened until, forgetting the present, she fancied herself again at her uncle's fireside, with some half dozen of the neighbors assembled;

"While laugh, and song, and sparkling jest went round."

It was amusing to see how entirely poor Barney forgot his sorrows and misfortunes, and how gayly he laughed and chatted away, just as though poverty or sickness, or loneliness had never laid siege to his heart. True to his Celtic nature, he dismissed in an instant every sombre thought and revelled in the gay stirring memories of his young days, those days of fun and frolic, when the hardest toil was but an accessory to the keen relish for the light-hearted sports of fair and market, "*pattern*" and wake — those lights which intersect the gloom of the Irish peasant's life. Barney had just been giving an animated account

of the christening of one of his children. "Which of them was it?" said he, "let me see now—I think it was little Micky that died about a twel'-month before his mother—Heavens be her bed!—Oh! bedad, no,—it was Phil—him that's in the States—an' sure he's the only one I have now out of all," he added with a sigh. Quick as thought, the spring of gayety in his heart was dried up; the mention of Phil recalled the sad reality of his own condition, and hence the heavy sigh. In the midst of his laughing description of the christening, and the jokes that such and such neighbors had cracked there, he struck by chance a chord of mournful tone, and his mirth was at an end. "Och, but sure them days are all gone—gone forever, an' it only makes a body down-hearted to be talkin' about them at all. Bedad," he added, with a sickly smile, "bedad, I b'lieve I was forgettin' myself altogether—but, faix, these rags," looking down at his tattered garments, "these duds of mine won't let me—I have only to look at them, an' at these poor, bony hands, an' I'm back in a jiffy—troth I am, nothing more nor less than Barney Dolan, as poor and as lonesome a crature as there's in the city of Montreal—an' that's a great word."

"Not so lonely now, Barney!" said Alice, who could not help laughing at Barney's sudden change of manner. "You'll not be so lonely any more, now that you have found us out. Have you any hopes at all of being able to get to your son?"

"O! then, sorra much," said Barney, in a dejected voice. "How could I have the face to ask Phil to send me more money an' him havin' a wife an' family—it would be very good of him to support me if I was with him, an' not him to

be sendin' me money that way — still, I'm sure if I asked it of him, or even if he knew how the matter stands, he'd be for sendin' it at once — God help me!" and he sighed deeply, "I'm a poor, burdensome crature."

"Do you smoke, Barney?" inquired Cormac, somewhat abruptly.

"Well, I do — when I get the chance — but that's not very often nowadays."

"Here, then, — take a *shaugh* o' the pipe," said Cormac, as taking it out of his own mouth, he wiped the shank, and handed it to the other.

"Long life to you, Mr. Riordan! May you never want for anything either here or hereafter!"

"Father," said Alice, coming close behind him, "hadn't I better give that box of tobacco to Barney!"

"What box, dear?"

"Oh, you know that box we were talking about a little while ago," and she touched his cheek with her finger.

"O! yes! yes! very good, Alice! do, my child — God bless you, for it's you that has always the good thought. Oh, to be sure — give it to him."

Alice then slipped a small tin box, like a snuff-box, into Barney's pocket, telling him he didn't want to open it till he got home — "as you've had your smoke now," said she, with a smile that made her fair face ten times fairer and prettier.

"True for you, Miss" — Barney was beginning.

"Say, Alice, Barney. I'd rather you *would* — it's too strange-like to call me *Miss*."

"Well — Alice — then — as I was sayin', it's

true for you. I have got a good smoke now, that'll do me for this night, any how. Many thanks to you for the box, an' the tobaccy, an' I pray God that your body may not be cowl'd in this world till your soul's in the glory of heaven. Bedad, Mr. Riordan, she looks as if she was *made* purposely for heaven — I declare she does so. I wouldn't ask to see an angel one bit purtier than your Alice. God bless the girl, an' bring her to a happy end."

"Well!" said Cormac, with a sigh, "her mother was a very likely woman, God rest her soul! and my brother-in-law tells me she's very like her; but sure that's the least part of it. Beauty is only skin deep, an' I'd rather have my little girl good and dutiful, an' obedient to God an' man, than if she was as fair as Vaynus, an' be proud out of her beauty. But, thanks be to God! she's a good girl, an' that's what I look to most."

Alice laughed heartily at Barney's artless compliment. "Take care now, Barney!" said she, "you don't know what harm you might do, saying such things up to my very face. I've a great mind to take back my box — upon my word, I have — only on Phil's account, I'd do it to punish you," and again she laughed.

"Why, what on earth has Phil to do with *my* tobacco — sure it's not likely that ever he'll smoke any of it?" "You don't know that," said Alice, still smiling at some conceit of her own.

"Well, at any rate," said Barney, rising, "I'll be movin' for fear you might change your mind, and be for takin' back the box. God's blessin' be about you both!"

"But you'll come soon again to see us — won't you?" said Alice, as she gave him his hat — it was a very bad one — nearly crownless.

“Och — get along with you now — you’d soon get tired of poor Barney, if he came too often. Do you hear her, Mr. Riordan, how she goes on?”

“I’ll lay a wager that you’ll be here to-morrow again,” said Alice, with a knowing smile. “Mind I tell you so!”

“I don’t believe a word of it,” said Barney, laughing, “but, whether or no, God bless you till I see you again; let that be long or short.”

Next day Alice and her father had scarcely got their breakfast over when the door of their room was flung open and in stepped Barney, his cheek flushed and he panting for breath, for he had nearly run all the way.

Alice laughed as she gave him a chair, “So here you are again, Barney! I told you so!” Barney shook his fist at her, for he had not yet found breath to speak.

“Oho! Barney,” cried Cormac, across the room from his arm-chair, “you’re not goin’ to forget us, I see.”

“Forget you!” said Barney, as soon as he could speak. “By the hokey day, you’re the quarest pair that ever I laid an eye on, That’s what you are!”

“Why, how is that, Barney?”

“Ay, you may well ask, with that sly face of yours,” he cried, snappishly; “wasn’t it the fine tobaccy you gave me in the box last night? Wasn’t it now, you young schamer! Sure, wasn’t I disappointed this mornin’ when I opened my box, thinkin’ of the fine smôke I was goin’ to have for my breakfast, an’ instead of tobaccy what was there in it but a five-dollar bill? Wasn’t it a purty trick you played on me?”

“It’s no trick, Barney,” said Alice, after she

had enjoyed her laugh at Barney's ludicrous disappointment, "the bill is your own. I had no tobacco to put in the box, so I just thought I'd put that bit of paper in it. You can light your pipe with it when you get tobacco, if you like!"

"Ah, then, Mr. Riordan," said Barney, going over to him, "is it true what that darlin' girl says — can you spare so much money? or are you indeed goin' to give it to me?"

"We're not goin' to give it, Barney — but we have given it. We *can* spare it, thanks to the Lord for all blessings, an' we give it to you with a heart an' a half, to take you to your son."

"So, it's no joke, after all," said Barney, slowly, as he gazed on the bill, which he held in his hand, "an' it's all my own — an' I can go to Phil at onst — an' them that's doin' this isn't a drop's blood to me — well, well! *well!*"

After a moment's pause, during which the color was gradually deepening on his cheeks, and the tears gathering in his eyes, he took hold of Cormac's hand and squeezed it between his own — then he went to where Alice stood and did the same to her — but not a word could he speak for some minutes. At last he drew the sleeve of his coat across his eyes, *hem'd* once or twice, and then stammered out something like thanks; "Well! God reward you! that's all I'll say now; it's a folly to talk. Oh! then — Oh! then — sure enough — *a friend in need is a friend indeed*. I can never pay you I'm afeard — but God — he will, indeed."

"Well! never mind, Barney, never mind the money now," said Alice, "I'll get you some breakfast, and after that you'll be in a better way of talking. You and my father can then settle on what you're to do."

In two days after, Barney Dolan set out for Buffalo, clothed in a good coat and knee-breeches of Cormac's, and it was no drawback on the pleasure felt by Alice and her father to remember that they must do without their stove for some weeks longer. They had walked down to the boat with Barney, and after wishing him safe to his journey's end, and exacting a promise that he would let them know when he got there, they were returning to their home, when a gentleman, coming out of a store in Notre Dame street, accidentally cast his eyes on Alice, and then starting exclaimed: "Why, Alice Riordan! is it possible?"

Without seeming to take any notice, Alice was hurrying on, holding her father by the arm; but the gentleman was not to be so easily shaken off. Walking close behind, he kept asking questions, to which Alice made no reply for some time, till, having turned down into Gosford street, where there were not so many people passing to and fro, she turned short round, her cheek suffused with a crimson blush, and her eye flashing with a strange light: "Captain Reynolds!" said she, "I don't know why it is that you take the liberty of following me this way through the streets. You will much oblige me by going about your business — if you have any."

"Only tell me where you live, then," replied the stranger, in a rich, musical voice, "and I will instantly desist from following you. But if you know how anxiously I have been seeking you ever since the Finlays left, you would forgive me. I am sure you would."

"I tell you again, sir, what I often told you before, said Alice, promptly, "that it's very unseemly for a gentleman like you to be coming

after a poor girl like me. If it's mocking me you are, you could employ your time far better, for I'm not so simple as you take me to be —— ”

“ Alice, Alice,” said Reynolds, in a tone of deep feeling, “ you know as well as I do that I have no intention of mocking you, but your icy coldness drives me to desperation. I tell *you* again that I will not give you up —— ”

“ Sir,” said Alice, interrupting him, “ this is my father — you must at least respect *him*.”

“ Oh! I beg a thousand pardons,” cried the captain, taking off his hat with sham respect; but just then he looked at Cormac for the first time, and immediately added: “ What! is your father blind?”

“ Even so, sir,” replied Alice. “ It has pleased Heaven to deprive the best of fathers of his sight; you can, therefore, understand that I am bound to him by cords even stronger than those of love. You see I am no subject for idle pastime; so I trust you will go your ways, and torment me no more.”

Reynolds made no answer, but he still pertinaciously kept his ground and walked on by her side. It might be that his Irish heart was touched by the peculiar circumstances in which he saw Alice placed, but yet he could not bring himself to obey her wishes.

“ Is he gone, Alice?” said Cormac, suddenly, for the whole affair had taken him by surprise, and it was only now that he could collect his thoughts sufficiently to speak.

“ Indeed, no, father, he's here still — more shame for him.”

“ Ah! Alice! Alice! see what it is to want the sight. If your father wasn't a poor dark man, that chap, whoever he may be, would never dare

to follow you as he's doin', an' me by your side. It doesn't say much for his generosity or courage, to be takin' advantage of our misfortune. I'd advise you," he said, turning his head back, "to let Alice Riordan alone for the time to come — she's not the stamp for such as you!"

"He's here, father — here, beside me," said Alice, and she then urged Reynolds again, and still more strenuously, to go away, fearing that he might discover where she lived.

"I understand," said he, bitterly, "you are afraid of my finding out your present home — but find it out I shall and will — were it only to punish you."

"Father," said Alice, in a tone of settled determination, "let us turn back, and go to my uncle's. I think if this *gentleman* follows there," laying an ironical emphasis on the word gentleman, "he'll not do it again in a hurry. Uncle Harry will soon give him what he's working for."

So they turned quickly, but Reynolds was still beside Alice with his mocking laugh. Just at that moment, when Alice was beginning to lose her patience, and her father was grasping his stick, with the intention of pushing Alice back a little, and aiming a blow at their tormentor, the latter was suddenly accosted from a cab which was passing: "Hollo, Reynolds! what are you after there? Are you bound for Monkland's to-day? — if so, jump in here quickly — we'll be late enough for dinner, and you know the old governor is rather particular that way. Come along, old fellow."

"Alice!" said Reynolds, in a low, deep voice. "you are again about to escape me, but I swear to you that we shall soon meet again. Love like mine is *not* to be so balked — you do not yet know

me — I see that plainly — but you *shall*, and that before long." So saying, he reached the cab with a single bound, and in an instant was talking away with his brother officer about the expected dinner at Monkland's, which was to be an almost exclusively military affair, all the officers in garrison being invited.

"Thank God — he's gone at last, father," said Alice, when the cab drove away, after its momentary pause. "That I may never see his face again — that's my prayer from my heart out!"

"But, Alice, where in the world did you get acquainted with him?" asked her father, "Or who is he at all that makes so free?"

"Why he's an officer, father, and an Irishman, too. He used to visit very often at Mr. Finlay's, and — and — he began to take notice of myself somehow, and would watch his opportunity to speak to me, though I shunned him as much as I could, and always forbid him to speak to me in such a way. Between ourselves, father, I think Miss Cecilia likes him, for she used often to praise him to me, and say how handsome he was and all that, and they say Mr. Finlay would be very glad to make a match of it, for that this Captain Reynolds has fine property at home. Indeed, I think he's no great prize for any one — that's my notion, let it be right or wrong. I'd be heart sorry to see Miss Cecilia lost with the likes of him, for I'm sure he'd be anything but a good husband."

"Well! may the Lord preserve you, my child, from all such wicked schemers, and give you grace to keep them at a proper distance — that's all I can say!"

Just as Cormac said these words they reached their home, for Alice had turned back again as soon as her persecutor was gone.



CHAPTER XII.

"Temptations are a file which rub off much of the rust of self-confidence." — FENELON.

THE first thing that Alice saw when she got home was a handsome new stove, planted right in the middle of the largest room, and the next object that met her eye was her Uncle Harry, seated in her father's chair, his jolly red face brimful of glee, as he watched the speaking countenance of his niece.

"Why! dear bless me, Uncle Harry! is this you?" she cried,

"Indeed, then, it is, Alice, my own four bones, and *no* mistake! Good morrow to you, Cormac! how are you to-day?"

Before her father could reply, Alice spoke again: "But what stove is this, uncle? — or do you know anything of it?"

Harry laughed: "Why, what should I know about it, Alice? Didn't you tell me some days ago that you were going to buy a stove, and so I made no remark about this one being here."

"Aha! uncle, you're playing a trick on us, I see *that* plain enough. You know very well that we didn't get the stove, nor bring it here neither. What brought *you* here either, uncle dear, if it's no harm to ask?" she added with a smile.

"Oh! what brought me," cried Harry, still laughing, "why, just to see how the chair fitted your father, or how he fitted it—ha! ha! ha!—eh! Cormac! how do you like it?"

"Ah! I knew very well," said Alice, "that it was all a trick of yours."

"Well! and if it is," cried her uncle shortly, "isn't it only servin' you right for the trick yourself played off on poor Barney Dolan? Now, Alice, what do you say to that? You thought I didn't know anything about it, but you see you were mistaken. You needn't blush that way, or turn away your head. By the laws! Alice Rior-dan, I was prouder when I heard that than I was for many a day before; and I said to myself at the very time, I'll be no loss to them anyway—so you see I've kept my word—that's the whole secret now, if you must have it."

"Why, what is it all about?" exclaimed Cormac, who had been anxiously turning from one speaker to the other, but was still at a loss for the precise meaning of what he heard.

"Nothing, father," said Alice, very quietly, "only that Uncle Harry has brought us a new stove, far better than the one I was thinking of buying. What do you think of that now?"

"What do I think?" cried Cormac, "why what can I think or say, only pray that the Lord may increase his store, an' grant him whatever He sees him most in need of. That's *my* prayer from my heart out this day."

"Well! well!" cried Harry, "say no more about it. It's only a small share of what I owe you for the prayers you both offer up for me. I hope they'll take effect some of these days, and make me a better man than I am. What kept you so long?"

Alice blushed, and pretended not to have heard the question, but her father quickly answered: "Well, indeed, Harry! I'm a'most ashamed to tell you, but then may be it's best for you to know it."

"Why, what the deuce do you mean?" cried Harry. "There's Alice with a face as red as a rose — what is it at all?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, poor Alice was tormented this hour past with a scamp of a fellow that followed her, and kept talkin' to her, an' wouldn't go away, all she could do, till she was fairly harassed with his impudence. We turned at last to go to your place, for fear he'd find out where we lived, an' as soon as we did, there he was *hot foot* after us again, but as luck would have it he met somebody that called him away, an' so we got rid of him."

"Yes, for that time, father," said Alice, "but he as good as swore when he was going that he'd find me out before long. Indeed, Uncle Harry, I don't know what I'm to do, for, though, with God's help, there's no danger to me, still it's very unseemly for one like me to have a gentleman coming after her."

"Cormac!" cried Harry, "tell me this now — why didn't you give the fellow a good trouncing — why didn't you, man alive?"

"Ah! Harry Malone! Harry Malone!" and Cormac shook his head dolefully, "you forget who you're talkin' to. Do you think I wasn't well inclined to give him what he desarved? — why, man, the very blood in my veins was burnin' like fire, an' I'd have given more money than you ever counted if I could only get my sight for five minutes. But God wouldn't have it so' an' of course I couldn't murmur against His holy will. O, indeed, indeed, it was a sore trial to my patience — the sorest I ever got."

"Poor Cormac—give me your hand!" said Harry, "I did forget—but no matter. Now, Alice, tell me all you know about this chap."

Alice told her uncle all that she had before told her father, and he listened in silence, his lips pursed up together, and his face redder than ever. When his niece had concluded, he drew a long breath: "Never mind, Alice, never mind, we'll be up to him, or I'll lose a fall for it. Don't be a bit afraid, child—nor don't give yourself the least concern about it. Leave the lad to me; and I'll go bail you'll get rid of him."

"Well, after all, uncle," said Alice, "I'd be sorry to hear of him being hurt. He's not bad in some respects."

"Bad!" cried Harry, "why, what do you call bad—I'm sure he has the impudence of the very devil himself, or he wouldn't act as he does, following people in the street, and puttin' his *comether* on them whether they will or not. But don't bother your head about him. I'll not hurt a hair of his head."

"Then, how will you manage it at all, uncle?"

"Be quiet now, I tell you!" said Harry, with a low chuckling laugh. "Can you tell me the fellow's address? What regiment does he belong to?"

Alice told him, renewing her request at the same time that Reynolds might not be personally injured. "Not but he deserves punishment," said she, "but then I'd be sorry to be the cause of any one being hurt."

"Why, take care now, Alice," said her uncle, with a scrutinizing glance, "or we'll begin to think that you have a little wish for the lad, eh! Cormac?"

"No—no—Harry, no such thing," cried Cor-

mac, "I'd stake my life on it that my Alice would never set her mind on the likes of him. Amn't I right, Alice—you don't care anything about him?"

"No more than I do about them I never saw," replied Alice, warmly, "and I'm not much obliged to Uncle Harry for even hinting such a thing. I hope God will never permit me to give way to such foolish, vain imaginings as that. Oh, no! father!—Oh, no!"

"Well! well!" cried Harry, "go and try your new stove. I'll bring Lizzie down this evening to take tea with you, if you'll promise to have some of them nice hot cakes that you used to make."

"Oh, indeed, then, I will, uncle—only bring aunty with you, and you'll see you'll have something nice. Go off now, and let me go to my work, and mind you come early."

"Don't forget now, Harry!" said Cormac, as his brother-in-law shook hands with him. "We'll be on the lookout for you after nightfall."

So away went Harry, and Alice having seen her father comfortably settled in his chair, took her work and sat down beside him.

"Alice, my child," said Cormac, after a short silence, during which he had been puffing out huge volumes of smoke from his *cutty* pipe, "Alice, I was very glad to hear you sayin' that you didn't care about that graceless fellow—to tell you the truth, dear, I was beginnin' to have a sort of a fear over me, though I wouldn't let on to Harry about it. I was afeared it was more of a trial to you than you let us know."

"Oh, father, father!" cried Alice, earnestly, "how could you think of such a thing? How could I ever have any liking for a man that from the very

beginning tried openly to seduce me into sin? Why, father, from the very first time that he dared to mention his odious purpose, I just had that same fear of him that Susannah must have had of the filthy old man who persecuted *her*. I can't understand how any one professing to be a Christian, and to fear God, can ever be induced to like people who would tempt them to break His commandments. Indeed, I can't, father, nor never *could*. Oh no, father dear! *that's* not my trial."

"*That's* not your trial, Alice!" said her father, quickly — "why, that's as much as to say that you *have* one."

Alice sighed deeply but made no reply. Her father laid his hand on her shoulder, and turned his sightless eyes full upon her, as though he would *force* them to read her countenance. Then he sighed, too, before he spoke, and when he did speak his voice was very mournful and very solemn.

"Alice! Alice! keep no secrets from your father! — you know as well as I do that you *ought* to have none to keep."

"Father!" said Alice, with equal solemnity of tone, "you might easily guess *why* I kept anything secret from *you*."

"I do, my daughter, I do — God bless you," replied her father, moved almost to tears by the sudden seriousness of her voice and manner. "You'd tell your poor old father anything except what you thought would grieve him. Ah! I know that very well. But *this* secret, Alice — if it's anything that weighs heavily on your mind, isn't it better for you to let me know it, an' may be I could give you some advice that would help you."

"No, father dear — don't ask me!" said Alice, and her voice trembled slightly, "advice could be

of no use to me, as I have long ago put the matter in the hands of God, and my sweet mother in heaven. So you see you needn't fear that any bad will come of it, and it would only grieve you, and make you fret, if you knew it."

"Well! well! Alice — you're always sure to be in the right, my daughter, for you always go to the fountain-head for advice and assistance. I'll not question you any more, though I'd like to know what your trouble is."

Alice sighed again, but, quickly shaking off her sadness, she said in a more cheerful tone, "I must soon go and prepare for the evening. I have to get in some things that I want." Just then a knock came to the door, and when Alice arose to open it, in walked Ellen Dempsey, with her smooth, quiet face, and her soft, stealthy step. Alice was rejoiced to see her, and taking her by the hand, led her up to her father. "Father, here's Ellen Dempsey. Sit down there beside him, Ellen."

"How d'ye do, Miss Dempsey?" said Cormac, as he held out his hand to the girl, "I hope your mother's in good health this evenin'."

"Pretty well, thank you, only for a slight cold she has. I wanted her to come out for a walk this evening, but she wouldn't, so I thought I'd just run over and see how you and Alice are getting on."

After talking a little while with Cormac, Ellen beckoned Alice out into the passage. "Alice, I'm going to ask a favor of you, and I hope you'll not refuse me."

"If I *can* at all, I won't," said Alice. "But let me know what it is."

"I'm going to be married, Alice, and want *you* to be bridesmaid. Will you oblige me so far?"

"Going to be married!" repeated Alice, in surprise. "And who is to be the groom?"

"Oh! a very nice, respectable young man, a bricklayer by trade — of the name of Hannigan — Arthur Hannigan. He came from Dublin only last year."

"And does your mother know this, Ellen?"

"Well! she *does* and she does *not* — that's just the plain truth," returned Ellen, looking as frank as she possibly could, for Alice had her eyes fixed upon her; "she knows very well that we have been keeping company this time back, and she likes Arthur well enough in every respect, except one, and that is his religion, for he's not a Catholic."

"Not a Catholic! — and yet you are willing to marry him, Ellen! Is it possible?"

Ellen blushed slightly, and then laughed. "But wait till you hear me out. I would *not* consent to marry him, only he promises faithfully that he will become a Catholic as soon as he can get properly instructed. Now, mother won't be satisfied with that promise, and wants us to put off the marriage till we can be of the same mind with regard to religion. Well! Arthur feels himself injured because she won't take his word, and he's so pouted if I don't marry him right off he'll never speak another word to me. Now, I was thinking that if we were married privately, and I to stay with my mother the same as before, and say nothing about it, until he'd have time to be instructed, and be received into the church, then when he'd be once a Catholic, we could tell mother and she'd be well pleased, I know myself. The reason why I came to ask you to be my bridesmaid is this, you're a great favorite with Father Smith, and if you'd only explain the matter to

him, I'm quite sure he'd marry us. Somehow I'd rather he'd do it than anybody else. Now that's the whole truth, Alice, as I have God to face, so you may look at me as closely as you like — I often *did* quail before that piercing eye of yours, but I don't fear it this time. That's a fact, Alice!"

"So I perceive," said Alice, very calmly, "I *see* you *are* telling me the truth, Ellen, for it is long since I learned to read your face. I'm very sorry I cannot do what you asked me to do."

"You cannot! and why not, pray?"

"Because your mother is not to know anything of it."

"But I tell you she *will* know very soon — haven't I given you good reasons for keeping it from her for a little while?"

"No matter, Ellen, nothing would induce me to enter into the marriage state without the consent of *my* parent, and I dare not encourage another to do what I would not do myself. Even were I to go with you to Father Smith it would not do you any good, for he would not perform the marriage under such circumstances, and would only blame me for having anything to do with it."

"Oh, very well!" exclaimed Ellen, with that peculiar toss of her head which Alice well remembered — "if you don't choose to accept my invitation there's no harm done. Even if Father Smith won't marry us, there are others who will, and I'll not be without a bridesmaid though Miss Alice Riordan refuses to be the one! Good-morning!" she said with freezing coldness, "I needn't ask you to keep this conversation secret, for stiff as you are, I know you'll do that."

"Ellen!" said Alice, making a sign for her to stay, "Ellen! will you just wait a minute? —

may I tell my father about this, and ask his advice?"

"No — no — no!" cried Ellen eagerly — "not for the world! I might just as well tell my mother at once. Mind if you even hint it to your father I'll never forgive you."

"To Father Smith, then?"

"Well," said the girl, musingly, "I don't care if you do — but be sure and tell him how Arthur intends to be a Catholic, and that he promises to have mother live with us. Won't you now, Alice — like a good girl?"

"Yes, yes!" said Alice, laughingly, "but I wish I could see this beau of yours that I might know what to think of him."

"I'll bring him here, if you wish, to-morrow evening, and you can come down and speak to us at the door, so that your father won't know."

"No, thank you," said Alice, quickly, "I'd rather you wouldn't bring him, so long as you wouldn't like him to be brought up stairs. I'd call that a shabby way of dealing."

"Oh! as you wish," laughed Ellen, "but now I must be off, for mother will be growing impatient. Good-by once more!" "Good-by, Ellen, give my love to your mother." "To be sure I will," said Ellen, and shaking her long, slender finger at Alice, by way of caution, she hurried away.

"What in the world kept you so long, Alice?" said Cormac as he heard his daughter's light step crossing the floor. "What had Ellen to say that took so much time?"

"Now you must not be angry with me, father dear," and Alice put her arms lovingly round his neck, "when I tell you that *that* must be a secret. You know, my own dear father, I never yet had

a secret that I wanted to keep from *you*, unless," she added with a low sigh, "one that I kept from you for fear of giving you useless pain — but this is not my own secret, and what's more I'm going to confide it to Father Smith to-morrow, if God spares me — so you needn't be afraid of its being anything wrong."

"I'm never afraid of *you*, Alice dear," replied the father, earnestly, "I know you'll have a hand in nothing that's bad, and since this secret belongs to another, it wouldn't be right for you to tell it to any one — even to me, without gettin' leave."

Alice stooped down and kissed his forehead without speaking, then hastened to make up for lost time by double assiduity to her work.

Nightfall came, and with it came Harry and Lizzie Malone, the former loaded with a nice little pot of raspberry jam, which Mrs. Malone put into his hand as they left home. When Alice had welcomed her aunt, and put her sitting in the post of honor — the arm chair — vacated by her father for that purpose, she felt at a loss whether to speak of the stove or not. But her doubt was soon at an end, for Uncle Harry called out all at once:

"I say, Lizzie!" and he winked at his wife so knowingly that Alice could not help laughing out, "I say, little woman! did you hear about the stove that the fairies sent here the other day?"

"Dear me, no!" and Lizzie affected great surprise, "sure I thought there were no fairies this side the water — eh, Alice?"

"You see there is then," said Harry, "they followed our little Alice all the way."

"Little Alice indeed!" cried his wife, "upon my credit she's not little Alice now. Why, man, she's two inches taller than yourself."

"Well! well!" laughed her husband, "you

can't deny, either of you, that what *I* want in length I have it in breadth, and that's more than Alice can say. Ha! ha! ha!—I had them there, Cormac—hadn't I now?"

"I'll tell you one thing, Uncle Harry," said Alice, "you're far too big either way to pass for a fairy!" and she smiled archly.

Every one laughed, and Lizzie slapped her husband on the shoulder. "You may give it up, Harry—upon my credit, but you may! You're found out, you see."

"Indeed then, he is, Mrs. Malone," put in Cormac, "there's not witch or fairy in Montreal, that would do for us what he an' you did, only yourselves two. May the Lord reward you both!"

"Come now to your tea!" said Alice—"while our cakes are hot. If they stand a while, they'll not be so good, Aunt Lizzie, don't stir—we'll push the table over there."

That was an evening to be long remembered, and even Lizzie felt its genial influence in her inmost heart, softening and refining, ay, and consoling. The piety of Cormac and his young daughter was so cheerful, and so diffused through all their words and actions, brightening and warming all around, that it was impossible to spend a whole evening in their company without loving the religion they professed.

"God bless my soul, Alice!" cried her uncle, as he looked at his silver watch, "if it isn't nine o'clock already, and I thought it wasn't more than eight, at the most. I tell you what it is, Cormac Riordan! yourself and Alice are about the happiest pair I know, for all you're so poor."

"True for you, Harry!" said Cormac, with a tranquil smile. "Glory be to God for all his mercies to us—sure enough, we *are* happy."

When we kneel down at night to say our prayers, I feel my heart so full of peace, and joy, and gratitude, that I could cry, only for shame's cause. An' I think Alice is happy, too."

A low sigh from Alice reached her father's ear, but her words went far to reassure him. "Oh, then, indeed I am, father, very, *very* happy; for even if I *had* any little trouble, I could offer it up to God, and He would be sure to deprive it of its sting, and heal the bruised spirit." She spoke with a warmth and an earnestness which attracted the eyes of her uncle and aunt, and touched the heart of her sightless father.

"Well! I declare, Alice," said her aunt, after looking at her a moment, "well, I declare, you're a curious girl. There's something about you that I can't understand; but I can feel it for all that. I wish I was half as good as you are, Alice, and half as pious. It becomes you so well!"

Alice laughed and turned to her uncle, who stood, hat and stick in hand. "Uncle, did you happen to hear or see anything of Captain Reynolds since morning?"

"No, I didn't," said Harry, quickly, "but I hope to make his acquaintance some of these days. Come along, Lizzie, it will be late when we get home. Good-night, Cormac! good-by, Alice!" Then tucking Lizzie under his arm off they went.

Next day Alice went to the Seminary to see Father Smith about Ellen's affair, and as she sat in the hall waiting for his appearance, she could not help smiling as memory brought back the simple wonder with which she had regarded the hallowed old house when she first crossed its threshold five years before. The scene was still the same; the crowd of applicants was still there, looking very much like those whom Alice had

seen on her first visit; the old porter had undergone little or no change, and all was perfectly familiar. "So it is," murmured the girl to herself, "the tide of human misery is always sending its burden in here, where they are sure to find comfort, advice, and assistance. Blessed abode of charity! how well do I now understand the magic word, *The Seminary!* word so dear to the suffering and the poor!" Her reflections were cut short by the appearance of Father Smith, who quickly perceived her in the corner where she sat.

"Well, Alice, how d'ye do?" said the priest, "and how is your father this morning?"

"Very well, I thank your reverence. He's getting along as well as can be."

"And what brought you here to-day, Alice?" asked Father Smith, who knew very well that Alice Riordan must have important business in hand when she came to him at such a time.

Alice glanced round at the numerous faces, and then said in a low voice, "might I ask your reverence to step over here to the window for one minute?"

"Certainly, child, certainly. Now, what's your errand?"

Alice then related, as briefly as she possibly could, the substance of what Ellen had told her, and then begged to know what she had best do. Some strong emotion had been gathering in the priest's face, and when Alice put this question to him, he replied in a deep husky voice, "Can you not bring the girl here this afternoon — but, stay — did you say the man's Christian name was Arthur?"

"Yes, sir — Arthur Hannigan."

"And his trade?"

"A bricklayer, your reverence."

“Hum! — well! and he came from Dublin about a year ago?”

“Yes, sir!” and Alice began to wonder very much at the tone in which these questions were put.

“Go straight, then, and bring this girl to me. Manage it as best you can, but bring her here without delay. I’ll not go out till you come back. God bless you, my child, you know not yet the good which you are doing.” Alice was hurrying away in silent obedience, when a new thought struck the priest’s mind. “On second thoughts, Alice, I’ll go myself, for she might not be willing to come. But go on as I told you, and keep her from going out till I arrive.”

Alice had scarcely time to ask Mrs. Dempsey how she did, and to apprise Ellen of Father Smith’s intentions, when his knock was heard at the door. Ellen turned pale and made a sign to Alice to show him into the parlor.

“Mother! don’t you think that’s like Father Smith’s knock?”

“I think so, Ellen,” said her mother, utterly unconscious of the fearful struggle raging in her daughter’s bosom, “You had better go and see.” Away ran Ellen, but she did not come back, as may well be supposed. When she entered the little parlor, and courtesied to the priest, he looked at her with a countenance “more in sorrow than in anger.” He held an open letter in his hand. “Child!” said he, “I have learned from your friend here — and a true friend she is — that you think of marrying a man by the name of Arthur Hannigan — and that without your mother’s consent. Read that letter which I received about two weeks ago, and you will see the depth of the abyss into which you were so near falling.”

While Ellen was endeavoring to decipher the blurred and blotted epistle, her mother came softly into the room, but on a signal from the priest, remained behind her daughter. Ellen had scarcely read a dozen lines when the paper dropped from her trembling hands, and she stood before the priest, now pale with terror and apprehension, and then red as scarlet with shame and confusion. Not daring to raise her eyes, nor to pick up the letter, she stood motionless and silent.

"Now, Ellen," said the priest, "you see that man is already a husband and a father. He has left a wife and three children to starve, beg, or steal in Dublin; and this letter is from the poor unfortunate wife, begging me to set inquiries on foot after her worthless husband. Just think of the pit which this unhappy man had prepared for you — child! child! I shudder when I think of what you have escaped through the mercy of God, and the good advice of your friend Alice."

Ellen burst into tears: "Oh, I see it all, your reverence, indeed I do! only for Alice I wouldn't have escaped the snare, and while I'm alive I'll never, never forget it to her."

"Take care, my good child, take care — be as grateful to Alice as you will, but see that in your gratitude to the creature you do not lose sight of Him whose hand drew you away from the verge of the precipice."

"Father Smith!" cried Mrs. Dempsey, now coming forward, trembling with apprehension, "what in the world does this mean?"

On hearing her mother's voice, Ellen screamed, and going over to Alice, hid her face on her shoulder. Father Smith said: "Now that the danger is past, my dear Mrs. Dempsey, it can do no harm for you to know it." He then placed the

letter in her hands, saying simply, "I believe you know this Hannigan?"

"Know him?" said the poor mother, the tears rolling down her cheeks. "Oh, most unfortunately I do, your reverence, and Ellen can't deny that I never had a good opinion of him; if matters went so far between him and her, I am not answerable for it before God, for He knows I did all I could to keep them asunder. So it seems that poor wayward child was near being taken in to marry him; is that the case, Father Smith?"

"Shall *I* tell your mother, Ellen, or *will* you?"

"Oh, tell her yourself, your reverence—do, if you please?" sobbed Ellen, without raising her head.

So empowered, Father Smith related the whole affair as far as he knew it, bringing strongly forward the part Alice had taken.

"May the Lord pour down His blessings on her head!" exclaimed Mrs. Dempsey, clasping her thin hands and looking upwards with pious fervor. "It's no more than I'd expect from her, and it isn't the first time her advice has been of use to Ellen. But oh, Ellen, Ellen, my poor, poor child! how did this deceiver get around you at all?"

"Mother! don't ask me! I wish I had never seen a sight of him, for I'm sure I'll never be able to hold up my head again, after what has happened, for I was so foolish as to tell the girls in the work-room, and some others about the doors. Oh, mother! Oh, Alice Riordan! what will I do at all?"

"Never mind, Ellen dear," whispered Alice, "you'll come and stay some weeks with me, till the report begins to die away, and then you can go home as quietly as if nothing had happened. No one here knows that Hannigan's a married

man, except what's in this room, so no one need know but that the match was broken off on some other account."

"What Alice says is right, Ellen," said her mother, making an effort to appear calm, "and, at any rate, there's no earthly use in taking on so. After all, *this* may be the best thing that ever happened you, for it will be a lesson to you all your life."

"And with God's help so it will, mother. Oh, indeed it will. I'll never marry any one, but live quietly and peaceably at home with you."

"Come! come!" exclaimed the priest, laughing, "that's going rather too far with the matter. I must not suffer you to make such a rash promise as that. But, to speak seriously, my child, I *do* hope that the Almighty permitted *this* to go so far in order to show you the danger of keeping secrets from your best friend—your mother. Happy was it for you that you thought of applying to Alice rather than to some other girls of your acquaintance."

"Oh, I know that well, your reverence," said Ellen, again taking hold of Alice's hand, "for when I spoke to Dora and Maria about it—poor Susan is not with us now—they jumped for joy at the thoughts of a wedding, and each of them offered to be my bridesmaid as soon as I liked. In fact, they both urged me to hurry it on, saying that what was to be done might as well be got over at once. It was the Lord put it in my head to go to Alice, and while there' breath in my body I'll never forget it."

"And now," said Father Smith, as he reached for his hat, "how are you to get rid of Hannigan?"

Ellen blushed deeply, "Well, indeed, sir, I

don't know. I never thought of that. I'll never speak a word to him again if I can help it, for I just feel as though the very sight of him would sicken me — I hate him so much."

"My child! you must not hate any one — you must endeavor to forgive him, and to pray for his conversion, but it is best for you not to see him — it is decidedly best. Let your mother see him."

"I beg your pardon, Father Smith, but I'm afraid the task would be too great for my present strength. I'll write to him, sir, if you think that would do as well."

"Very good, Mrs. Dempsey, only let him know that he is found out, and I will answer for his not troubling you any more, provided Ellen keeps out of his way for some time,"

"Oh, surely I'll do that, sir," said Ellen, eagerly, "mother will have no trouble now to keep me in the house, for I couldn't bear to show my face out — and to meet him — Oh, no, sir."

"Well, Alice," said Father Smith, "now that this affair is so happily ended, I want to ask whether you have heard from the Finlays since they left."

"Not a word, your reverence," said Alice, in a dejected tone, "and I'm beginning to feel really anxious about them, for Miss Cecilia promised to write to me as soon as they'd reach Edinburgh. Mrs. Finlay's health is so much impaired that I'm very much afraid of her."

"I hope they'll visit Ireland before they come back," said the priest, "for I know Mrs. Finlay is most anxious to have her husband see our people in their own land — poor and down-trodden, but patient and enduring — in short, she wants him to see *Catholic* Ireland with his own eyes, and for herself, she has an eager longing to behold the

Island of Saints, and to visit the ruined shrines thickly studded over the land. She calls Ireland the home of religion, and regards its soil as consecrated. She thinks that *there*, if any where, she will find courage to profess the religion which her husband still hates—the religion of her own choice.”

“But, dear me, Father Smith,” cried Mrs. Dempsey, “is it possible that Mrs. Finlay has a notion of becoming a Catholic?”

“It is more than possible—it is quite true. Mrs. Finlay has been for several years strongly disposed to cross the Rubicon—I mean, to come over to us—but latterly she has made up her mind to disclose her intentions to her husband, and I trust she will very soon enter the church. You see,” he added, laughing, “no harm has come of Alice’s going into the family, though you and her father were very fearful at the time. But Mrs. Finlay knew, and so did I, that Alice would keep her ground, ay, more than keep it, and so, thank God, she did, and her good conduct has gone far to soften Mr. Finlay’s prejudices against Catholics. One thing is certain—the good gentleman has long left off tampering with the faith of Catholics, and that, of itself, is one point gained. Good-by, Mrs. Dempsey! Ellen! I have good hopes of you now, so mind you do not disappoint me. Pray, my child! pray much and often—prayer is your grand talisman against temptation. Alice, I’ll come and see your father very soon—tell him so—and should you hear from Mrs. Finlay before I see you, I’ll thank you to let me know.”

“I will, sir,” said Alice, standing up. “Might I make so free as to ask, will you be hearing confessions this evening in the Recollet? But, sure

"I mightn't have asked," she added, recollecting herself, "for to-morrow will be All Saints day."

"I'm just going down now, Alice," said the priest, with a kindly smile, "so any time you come you'll be sure to find me at my post."

When Father Smith was gone, Mrs. Dempsey went over and laid her hand on Alice's shoulder. "Alice Riordan!" said she, in a low voice, "how can I ever repay you for this last service — the best and greatest of all? Under God, you have saved my child from infamy, worse than death — how, how can I thank you?"

"Oh! that is easily told," said Alice, with a smile, "the very best way you can thank me is by saying nothing at all about it, except when you're at your prayers: then I hope to be remembered; and another thing, I want you to forgive Ellen, and let bygones be bygones, as they say in Ireland. Won't you, Mrs. Dempsey?"

Mrs. Dempsey's eyes filled with tears, as she silently held out her hand to her daughter. Ellen put one arm round her mother's neck and reached the other hand to Alice. "And I, Alice dear," said she, "what am I to do for you? I know as well as possible that you have something to lay on me, too."

"I declare, I think you're something of a witch, Ellen!" cried Alice, with her low, musical laugh. "Now, I just *am* going — *not* to lay anything on you — but to make a request, and this is it — that you'll never keep a secret again from your mother — you see now what comes of it."

"Oh! may the Lord be merciful to me," cried Ellen, fervently, "as I will follow your advice. Alice Riordan! Mother! I promise you this, with God's help, and for the future I hope you'll find me an altered girl. You used to make me very angry,

mother dear, by telling me that I ought to take example by Alice; *now* I see it's my only chance for peace or happiness, here or hereafter. Are you both pleased now?"

"Pleased," cried her mother, "why, Ellen, my daughter, I feel at this moment as if a load was lifted off my heart; I'm twenty years younger than I was an hour ago. Thanks and praises be to God! Oh, Ellen, if you only keep that resolution, I can promise you happiness, temporal and eternal."

"Well! good people," said Alice, "I see there's no danger now in Ellen's remaining here. With God's assistance, and her present good dispositions, she can defy all the arts and artifices of the devil and his agents. So I must be going, lest my poor dear father might be wanting me. Good-by, then, for the present. Perhaps I'd bring my father up in the evening, when I take him out for a walk."

"I hope you will, Alice," said Mrs. Dempsey. "Don't forget now!" whispered Ellen, as she opened the door.

"Oh! never fear!" and drawing her shawl around her, Alice stepped out into the street, and rapidly retraced her homeward way.





CHAPTER XIII.

“Christianity did not come from heaven to be the amusement of an idle hour, to be the food of mere imagination; to be ‘as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and playeth well upon an instrument.’ No; it is intended to be the guide, the companion, of all our hours; it is intended to be the serious occupation of our whole existence.”

WHEN Alice had gone a little way down the street she suddenly turned on her heel and walked back to Mrs. Dempsey’s house. Opening the door (as she well knew how), she popped her head into the little parlor where the mother and daughter were still sitting. “Ellen,” said she, with a bright smile, “I forgot to ask you one question — may I tell my father *now*?”

“Oh! certainly, Alice, certainly,” exclaimed Ellen, if no one was to know it but you and your father, I mightn’t be much afraid — Oh, yes! to be sure you can tell him.”

“Very well!” said Alice, “that is all I wanted — good-by, once more.”

“Remember your promise, Alice,” said Mrs. Dempsey, to which Alice answered by a nod of assent, and then her fair, smiling face vanished, and the door closed again.

Cormac Riordan was sitting winding off some worsted which he had stretched over two chairs,

when his daughter came in. "Father!" cried Alice, as she threw herself down on a seat beside him, "Father! I can tell you the secret now."

"Well, my daughter, what is it?"

"Why, Ellen Dempsey was going to be married to a Protestant unknown to her mother, and I begged of her to let me consult Father Smith about it. Well, she consented, for she wanted *him* to marry her, and what do you think but it turned out that the man was already married, for his poor wife had written to Father Smith inquiring after him."

"The Lord be good to us!" cried Cormac, holding up his two hands in astonishment.

"Why, what will the world turn to, at all? Oh, then, but that *was* the narrow escape! But sure the Lord wouldn't desert poor Mrs. Dempsey that way, even though her daughter is disobedient, and deceitful, and self-willed."

"But, father, dear, don't say that of poor Ellen. Indeed, indeed, she's sorry for the past, and humbles herself like a little child before God and her good mother. Now that she has escaped so well, her mother says that it happened for the better, because it will be a lesson to Ellen for the time to come."

"Well, thanks be to God at any rate that the danger is past," said Cormac, "as I hope it is. But aren't we going to confession this evening, Alice?"

"Yes, father — I'll just go to my work now, and do as much as I can till about nightfall, and then we'll go. Of course you remember what day this is?"

"Indeed I do, Alice," replied her father in a low voice. "This is Hallow Eve — Oh! God be with them that's far away! — poor old Ireland!

many a merry Hallow Eve we spent there! But it seems they don't much mind it here, Alice—well! well!" he added, with a sigh, "there's no cure for spilt milk, and time once past can never, never be recalled."

"No, nor there's no use fretting about it," said Alice, in as cheerful a tone as she could command—"let us think and talk of the present and the future, rather than the past—which is a mournful theme for most people. When we're coming home from church we'll go round by Mrs. Dempsey's and stay a little while, if you have no objection." To this Cormac agreed, and then both relapsed into silence, Alice plying her needle as though for life or death, while her father pulled out his pipe and began to smoke, which he always did when haunted by old saddening memories of days gone by.

When the first shades of twilight were falling on the city, Alice and her father directed their course to the Recollet church, and both went to confession to Father Smith. The following day, being the feast of All Saints, they received the holy Communion side by side, and it was a beautiful sight to see the watchful care with which the young girl led her sightless parent to the altar, and back again to their seat. The tender affection, the profound respect, with which she regarded him could not fail to attract attention, and more than one parent heaved a heavy sigh at the remembrance of the different treatment *they* received from their children.

Having remained some time in the church, returning thanks to God for this greatest of all favors, Alice and her father returned to their humble home, and had barely time to get their breakfast, when a message was brought from

Harry Malone, requesting his niece to go over to his house as soon as she possibly could after Mass.

"Why, what in the world does uncle want with *me* in such a hurry?"

"Well, I'm sure I don't know," said Tommy — *little* no longer, "he bids me tell you that he'll take no excuse, for he wants you on very particular business."

"Oh, very well, Tommy, I'll go as soon as I can." Tommy made his exit.

"Father, will you come?" said Alice. "The walk will do you good."

"I b'lieve I will, Alice," replied her father, "for I'd be frettin' all the time you'd be away to know what Harry wanted with you. Are we just goin' now?"

"As soon as I have these vessels washed, father. You can be putting on your outside coat — here it is."

When the father and daughter reached Malone's domicile, they found its owner waiting anxiously for their appearance. "Come in here quickly!" said he, as he led them through the parlor, into the larger room beyond. "Now just get yourselves in there behind that screen, and don't make the least noise, no matter what happens, unless I call to you."

"Why, what in the world are you about, Uncle Harry?" cried Alice, in amazement.

"Never you mind that, girl, but do as I bid you, and I'll warrant you'll have some fun before long. Go in at once — here, Cormac, give me your hand — in with you, Alice — woman, alive! why do you stand staring at me as if I had two heads on me? Why, as sure as I'm here, you'll spoil all."

"Well, uncle, anything to please you," said Alice, taking her place beside her father, "though I protest I can't understand *this*."

For a few minutes all was silence in the room, but on a sudden the parlor door was thrown open, and Harry was heard showing a stranger in. "Sit down, sir," said he, "sit down. I'm not used to have such visitors as you. Sit down, sir!"

The person so addressed cleared his throat two or three times before he replied: "I received an anonymous note this morning informing me that there is a young girl in this house of the name of Alice Riordan. Is it so?"

Alice started, and laid her hand on her father's arm. "O father!" she whispered in his ear, "it's Captain Reynolds himself. Indeed it is!" Her father only answered by a sign, and then both renewed their attention, anxious for Harry's reply.

"Ahem!" said Harry, "so that's your business here. Well, sir, before I answer your question, I'll take the liberty of asking *you* another. Now, what do you want with Alice Riordan?"

"What do I want with her?" repeated the captain, in a mocking tone, "why, what do you *suppose* I want with her?"

"Well, I'm sure I can't guess," said Harry, with affected simplicity, "perhaps to get some shirts made, or pocket-handkerchiefs hemmed, for I know she's a good seamstress."

Reynolds laughed. "Very well, put it on that footing if you like. Anything at all, only let me see the girl. I'll tell *her* what I want."

"Couldn't you leave your message with me, sir?" said Harry. "I'll deliver it as straight as a rush. I declare I will."

The captain laughed again, and his laugh was

so impudent that it brought the warm blood tingling to Alice's face. "Why, really, my worthy and most rubicund friend, you are either a great knave or a great fool. Which am I to think?"

"Which you please, my impudent and most conceited friend!" replied Harry, imitating the other's tone.

"Why, what the d—l do you mean, my good fellow?" cried the officer, starting to his feet with a force that made the floor quiver, "who are you that dares to speak to me in such a way?"

"I'm Alice Riordan's uncle, captain, if you want to know. Now what's your will — what am I to tell my niece?"

"*You* her uncle!" cried Reynolds — "Oh! my dear sir, that alters the case."

"So I thought," said Malone bluntly. "Well, I'm waiting for your answer. I ask you again what do you want coming after my niece? — eh! tell me *that* now!"

"Why, I wanted her to make some shirts for me, as you shrewdly guessed."

"Oh! you do — do you? — very good! we'll just take your measure." Then taking up a large hand-bell off the table, he rang it loudly, and instantly the door from the kitchen was flung open, and a rushing sound was heard as of many heavy feet. Alice could no longer refrain from peeping out, and sure enough there were six or eight sturdy-looking fellows grouped behind her uncle. Reynolds stood eyeing them with a supercilious sneer on his handsome countenance.

"Boys!" cried Harry, with a significant glance at some cord which lay on a table near, "Boys, you'll come over and take this gentleman's measure. Do it gently and well now, for you see he's the queen's officer."

"Why, what do you mean, you low-bred fellow!" said Reynolds, with a heightened color and an angry voice, at the same time laying his hand on his sword-hilt. "Have you brought me here to insult me?"

On a signal from Malone two of the strongest men sprang forward, and quick as thought laying hold of the captain's arms tied them behind his back. "Hear him now," said Harry, with a chuckling laugh. "Hear *him* talking of insult! — him that's following my niece for so long a time, making her offers that would disgrace any decent female. *That* was no insult, to be sure. Oh! my lad, you were in the wrong shop that time. You thought Alice had no friends to revenge her wrongs, but, by the good daylight, my fine fellow, we'll teach you she has. *You're* a pretty fellow to go on hunting Alice Riordan, and persecuting her though you wouldn't get her for a wife — captain and all as you are — no, not if you were rolling in gold and silver."

"No danger of my asking her for a wife," returned Reynolds. "I'm not to be caught so easily as that. But I say, old brandy face! you'd better order these fellows to untie my hands, or if you don't," and he swore an awful oath, "I'll make you rue the day you offered such an outrage to a gentleman."

"Go to the d——l," cried Harry, "and farther, if you wish. Go on, boys, finish your job." Reynolds stamped and kicked, swore and threatened, but all in vain: his arms and legs were securely bound, and he placed on a chair, without the power of motion.

"Now," said Harry, "as I suppose this modest gentleman will be for prosecuting us, just run, one of you, up to Dalhousie square, and ask Colonel

Hampton to step down this way. Tell him we have one of his officers here that wants to see him."

"Oh, pray do not send for Hampton!" cried Reynolds, speaking for the first time in a tone of persuasion. "Anything at all but that. He and I are not friends, and I'd rather be hanged than have him see me in this cursed plight."

"Go on, I tell you!" cried Harry.

In an instant, Alice slipped away from her father, and caught her uncle by the hand. Looking into his face with her sweetest smile, she whispered, "Call him back, uncle, call him back!"

Harry obeyed, almost mechanically, and then he asked, "What the deuse brought you out, Alice? What business have *you* to interfere — couldn't you let me work the packet my own way? — eh now! couldn't you stay where you were?"

"Uncle!" said Alice, still in an undertone, "*you* don't know what a heavy punishment it would be to expose him before that Colonel Hampton, who hates the Irish as he hates the old boy himself — ay, and far more — as I told you before, this gentleman has many good points in his character, and I'd be very, *very* sorry to see him publicly disgraced." Then she said in a louder tone, "I am sure, uncle, that Captain Reynolds will never molest me again, now that he knows that I am *not* friendless. Only get him to promise that he will never trouble me more, and I will answer for it that he'll keep his promise."

"Humph!" cried Harry, contemptuously, "I wouldn't give a pinch of snuff for a promise like that!"

"Well, at any rate, uncle, send the men away. There's no use in keeping them standing there."

There was no resisting her soft pleading voice,

so Harry nodded to his satellites, and they trooped from the room.

"What are you laughing at, you young witch?" cried Malone, seeing his niece's face dimpled with smiles.

"Nothing, uncle!" said Alice, endeavoring to compose her features. She had caught a glimpse of her aunt peeping from the kitchen, through the half-open door, and she was thinking of the day when she rolled into the parlor at Father Smith's feet.

All this had been but a moment in passing, and Alice had not yet looked towards Reynolds. Now she took her uncle by the hand, and led him up to where he sat. "Uncle!" she said with a sudden gravity that well became her, "uncle, untie those cords — do, for my sake."

"I'll be hanged if I do then," retorted Harry stoutly, "just for your sake I will *not*. It's only a small part of what he deserves for his treatment of you. Let me alone now, for the more generous and forgiving you show yourself, it makes me all the angrier with him. If he had a spark of honor in him, he'd be burning with shame this blessed minute, for if you're not heaping coals of fire on his head they were never heaped on any sinner — that's all."

"Uncle! uncle! will you refuse me this favor — will you, indeed, refuse me! It's long since I asked anything from you, and I know you'll do *this* for me."

"I won't, I tell you!" replied Harry, shortly and decidedly.

"Now, Uncle Harry! look me in the face, and say that again!"

"No, I'll not," and he turned his back, as though for fear he might look at her, "I know very well

what you're at — you think I couldn't hold out against the likeness that's in your face, but I'll take care I'll not look at it."

"Very well, uncle," said Alice, going over and dexterously untying the knot that had bound the gallant captain. "You may turn round now," and she laughed right merrily. "I'll not ask you any more."

The instant he was at liberty, Reynolds caught hold of the little hand that had broken his disgraceful bonds. He would have raised it to his lips, but it was quickly snatched away and Alice drew back, with a sudden change of manner, and a flush on her cheek that bespoke anger.

"Do not touch me," she said. "Keep at a proper distance."

"But, Alice ——"

"Why, what the mischief!" — cried Harry, "how did he get loose — who did it?"

"I did, uncle," said Alice calmly. "I did it, that he may go away in peace, and I appeal to his own honor as a gentleman. I know he *has* honor, and I *will* trust him."

"You'll trust him!" shouted Malone, "you *will*, eh? — what the deuce do you mean by that? I say, what do you mean?"

"I mean, dear uncle, that I'll willingly trust his word, if he gives it to us, that he'll molest me no more. I think if *you* let *him* alone — for the future, that he'll let *us* alone. Captain Reynolds, am I not right?"

"Alice Riordan!" said the officer, in a tremulous tone, "you demand too great a sacrifice — the more I see of you, the more difficult do I find it to obey your cruel mandate. I cannot give you up."

"You *must*, Captain Reynolds — you must give me up. You see I am not without protectors,"

here she laid hold of her uncle's hand, and held it caressingly, "and besides you can never — *never* succeed in drawing me from the path of virtue. Never." And she spoke with an energy which drew a wondering stare from Malone, and made Reynolds quiver, soldier as he was. "Captain Reynolds," she went on, in a somewhat lower tone, "I believe you are a Catholic — now let me tell you candidly, once for all, that the God whom we serve must be served in deed and in truth — there can be no tampering or prevaricating with his holy law, and therefore it is that I cannot — dare not — listen to any who would tempt me to disobey Him. Learn now that I would sooner suffer death than become even for a moment the slave of the devil. Now you understand — do you not?"

"But, Alice — hear me!"

"No," said Alice, firmly, "you shall first hear what I have to say on another point relating to this affair. As a Christian I forgive your long persecution of me, provided you put an end to it, but now that I have shown you how hopeless is your pursuit of me, let me speak a few words to you on a matter which closely concerns yourself." Reynolds bowed, with a sort of abstracted air. He was pale, and the expression of his face was both saddened and sobered.

"Uncle!" said Alice, in an undertone, as she opened the parlor door, "uncle! will you go and bring my father out — I'm sure he's tired waiting for us."

"And well he may!" retorted Malone, gruffly. "I tell you what it is, Alice, I don't understand your goings on, and what's more I don't much like it. What have *you* to do talking to such people in private?"

The word was cut short by a soft hand laid on his mouth, and Alice laughingly exclaimed: "I know what you would say, uncle dear — but only just bear with me for five minutes, and I promise you I'll never do such a thing again. Will you walk into the parlor, sir?" she added, turning to Reynolds, with that modest gravity which represses undue familiarity.

"Humph!" muttered Harry, "says the spider to the fly — it's the fly inviting the spider this time, anyhow." Going over to conduct Cormac forth from his hiding-place he was stopped by Lizzie, who had stolen in on tiptoe, and, pulling him down to her, whispered in his ear:

"Did you ever see such a girl in all your life, Harry? when all came to all she wouldn't let you punish him, and what in the world did she bring him into the parlor for?"

"Why, how did *you* know what happened, you little Paul Pry of a woman!" exclaimed Harry, aloud, as he shook off his wife's grasp. "You were at your old trade of basket-making, I'll engage. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Come out here, Cormac!" and he reached his hand to the blind man, who seemed so completely bewildered by what he had heard that he could scarcely understand what was said to him.

Mrs. Malone had made no answer to her husband's not very gentle rebuke, but when he turned towards her, after placing Cormac on a seat, he found her with her eye to the keyhole, at the very same door which had so treacherously betrayed her on a former occasion. With a muttered imprecation, Harry took hold of his peeping spouse, and lifting her, as one would a child, he planted her small weight on a chair at the farther end of the room, saying, "There now! Keep

yourself there till I bid you rise. Upon my credit! Lizzie Malone! you're enough to disgrace any man with your prying into other people's business! that's what you are!"

Just then Alice opened the door, and there was a smile on her face, for she had overheard her uncle's speech, "Now, my dear uncle," said she, "Captain Reynolds is going away, and he wants to bid you good-by, and to thank you for your civility to him."

"To thank me!" cried Harry, turning short round, "what the mischief will he thank me for? —if it hadn't been for you I'd have given him cause to remember me. I would, by the ——"

"Don't swear, uncle, don't swear."

"Mr. Malone!" said Reynolds, holding out his hand, which Harry seemed half inclined to refuse —but he changed his mind and took it. "Mr. Malone! what your niece says is quite true. Roughly as you *did* use me, —I freely forgive you —nay, I thank you sincerely, for you have given me a lesson —hard it certainly was," he added, with a smile — "a lesson which I shall never forget. At another time I would have resented such an insult to the very death, but your niece —may God bless her! —has succeeded in driving away the evil spirit which had possession of me. Her purity of heart and her ever-active piety have elevated her sex in my esteem, and inspired me with a love for that virtue which shines so brightly in her. For the rest, Alice will answer for my good conduct —she will be my security for the time to come."

"That I will, sir, and I hope soon to be able to give my friends here a good account of you."

"Depend upon it I will lose no time," said Reynolds, "you have set me on a new trail, and I

never *pursue* with moderation, as *you* can bear witness." He reached his hand to Alice, and this time hers was not withheld. "God bless you, Alice! God bless you!" he said, with deep feeling, "how well I loved you I need not — dare not say. My obligations to you are great, and ingratitude was never one of my vices. I shall ever remember you — as one," he quickly added, "too pure, too unselfish for this sinful, self-seeking world of ours. Alice! if I ever attain that happiness which shines like a meteor far away, I shall owe it to you. Farewell!" He then shook hands with Harry, who, though fairly puzzled, could not avoid seeing and feeling that "all was right," as he afterwards said. So he submitted his sinewy digits to be pressed by the delicate hand of Reynolds, muttering something about riddles and bothering people's brains.

"And now, Alice, I want to speak to your father."

"Very well, sir, here he is! Father dear, here's Captain Reynolds — he's going to leave Montreal." Cormac stood up and made a bow. He could not bring himself as yet to think well of the officer whom he had so lately regarded as the persecutor of his daughter, yet he would not say any thing uncivil.

"Mr. Riordan," said Reynolds, with a smile, "you will not refuse to shake hands with me for the sake of Ireland?"

"No, sir," said the blind man, holding out his hand at the same time, "I wouldn't refuse it when that's the way you ask it. But indeed, to tell you the truth, it's not more than ten minutes since I'd as soon shake hands with the old boy himself. I don't understand the way that matters are goin', but Alice seems to know it all, an' that's enough for me."

"You are right," exclaimed the captain earnestly, as he warmly shook the offered hand.

"You may safely rely on your daughter's judgment, and I tell you, Mr. Riordan, you may well be proud of her — she does equal credit to those who brought her up, and to the religion whose ordinances she so sedulously follows! May she and you be as happy in time and in eternity as I wish you — once more — farewell!" and he bowed around to all.

Alice followed him to the door, and so did her uncle — the one to say in a low, earnest tone:

"Make her as happy as she deserves, and above all things, never let her know that you heard any thing from me — you know what I mean?"

Uncle Harry caught hold of the captain's hand, and gave it a loving squeeze: "Well! somehow I can't help thinking that you're not the man I took you for — bad manners to me! captain! but there's something about you that my heart warms to, after all, now that you're to leave Alice alone, I hope you owe me no ill will about the trick I played on you. I couldn't help doing it, sir, as matters stood, and I'd have done more too, if you hadn't turned out as you did. Might I make free to ask you to take a tumbler of punch or a glass of wine on the head of the quarrel we had? do now, Captain Reynolds!"

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Malone," said the captain, endeavoring to repress the smile which hovered on his lips. "Should I live to see you again, I may thankfully accept your kind invitation, but for the present you must excuse me. Good morning!"

Harry attended him to the door, saying, "Well! I declare I'm almost sorry you're going away — when do you think you'll be back in this part of the world?"

"God alone knows that — perhaps never — but if I should, you may depend upon receiving an early visit from me." So away he went, leaving behind him a far different impression from that which the antecedents might have given room to expect. Harry stood a moment looking after him, and then bustled in again to talk over the matter with Alice.

Lizzie was at first inclined to think herself slighted because *she* had not been noticed, but after a little quiet reasoning from Alice, she got over that, and began to worry with questions as to what had passed while she and the captain were in the parlor. When Harry appeared, he took up the subject, and *would* have the secret.

"—And what do *you* say, father?" said Alice, taking hold of her father's hand. "Don't *you* want to hear the secret?"

"Well! if you're at liberty to tell it, Alice dear, sure enough, I *would* like to hear it, for I can't get at the bottom of the matter, do as I will."

"This much I can tell you all, then," said Alice; "Captain Reynolds is going to exchange into a regiment that's stationed in Dublin, and he'll be going away in a few days. That's all I can tell you now, but very soon I hope I'll have leave to explain all to you."

This did not at all satisfy Malone, and still less Lizzie, in whose cranium the bump of inquisitiveness must have been largely developed. Both grumbled, and declared it "altogether too bad," but Cormac cheerfully acquiesced, and pronounced it "all right."

"Well! now that all is over," said Alice, rising from her seat, "I think, father, we ought to be going. Indeed, indeed, Uncle Harry, you played us a pretty trick this morning. You see

I've lost my whole forenoon, and must work hard, hard, the remainder of the day. I declare, I think I must get some person in to help me, for I've a great deal more work than I can do."

"Ay! but that isn't telling us what we wanted to know, Alice," said Mrs. Malone; "you've managed to keep the secret, after all."

"Well! never mind, aunt," said Alice, laughing, "there's a good time coming — only wait a little, and as sure as you're there, you'll hear the secret. Good by now — I suppose we'll not see you again till Sunday."

When Cormac Riordan was comfortably seated in his arm chair, Alice stirred up the fire, and put down the dinner to cook; then taking her work, she drew her seat over beside her father, and after a short silence, thus went on:

"Now, father, I know there's no danger in telling *you* anything that's to be kept secret, so I'm just going to give you a little knowledge. Do you remember me telling you once that Miss Cecilia had a notion of Captain Reynolds?"

"To be sure I do, Alice — I mind it well."

"Well! I knew all along that the captain thought a good deal about Miss Finlay, for all he used to be teasing *me* so — of course, because he thought I was poor and had no friends, and that he might just amuse himself at my expense. I often took notice that he used to be as jealous as could be when Miss Cecilia was talking or dancing with any other. So I just took a thought that I'd try a little plan of my own, and I told him how I knew that Miss Cecilia liked him better than any one else. Sure enough, father, he nearly jumped off his feet, and he got as red as fire, and then he said, 'Pshaw! Alice Riordan, you do but mock me!' But when I went on and assured him

that it was no mocking, only downright earnest, he began to believe it, and you never saw a man in your life was better pleased. I told him that only for the way matters stood, I wouldn't on any account give a hint of Miss Finlay's secret; only that I knew it would be the means of bringing them together, 'for,' said I, 'Captain Reynolds! I know your mind better than you think, and I'm sure you'd rather have Miss Finlay for a wife than any lady that you know,' — with that he was for snatching my hand, and protested that I was worth a dozen ladies, but of course I drew away my hand, and told him very coolly — 'Keep your hands to yourself, sir, if you want to hear any more. I don't wish to be compared with ladies, captain! I'm only a poor girl that has to work hard for my living.' Then he begged my pardon, and told me just what he intended doing. He's going to Ireland, as I told you all, in Uncle Harry's, and then he'll find out Mr. Finlay's family, and offer himself to Miss Cecilia. Isn't that delightful, father," continued the now animated girl, "and what do you think, the captain said, if he succeeded, he'd get Miss Finlay to write to me herself and tell me all."

"The Lord bless you, Alice dear!" said her father, fervently, "I don't know where you got so many fine words — I'm sure, if poor Dinny or Catty heard you — ochone! the Heavens be their bed this day! — they'd scarce know which end of them was uppermost, they'd be so proud. An' then you're always doing something good — something to make others happy. If you were only happy yourself, I'd be content!"

"I am happy, father," and as Alice spoke she struggled to keep down a sigh which would come up from her heart. "Happy with you — happy

in performing the part which God assigned to me! Oh! indeed I am as happy as I can expect to be here below!"

"Well! I'm glad to hear it, Alice dear!" said her father, in a tone much more like "I don't believe a word of it," but just then the dinner was ready, and Alice led her father over to the table, and the subject was dropped for that time.

A month passed away after that memorable day, and Alice heard, by mere chance, that Captain Reynolds was gone "home to Ireland" — she began to feel anxious about Mrs. Finlay, fearing that she might be dead, or at least dangerously ill. Two weeks more passed away, and her daily visit to the post-office was rewarded. In reply to her usual question, "Is there anything for Alice Riordan, sir?"

"Yes, here's a letter for Miss Riordan — I suppose it's the same person — what street do you live in?"

"Sanguinet street, sir."

"All right, then." So she got the letter.

"How much have I to pay, if you please, sir?"

"Nothing — the letter was prepaid in Dublin."

Alice turned up the letter, fully expecting to see a black seal, but there was no such thing, and with a fervent "Thank God," she put it in her pocket and hurried home. It was late in the afternoon, and her father was lying back dozing in his chair, so Alice sat down and read her letter. When she opened it, a small piece of thin paper dropped out, but Alice was far too eager to pay any attention to it. So she began to read, and as she went on her face became flushed, and her lips trembled. Then her eyes filled with tears, and the color left her cheek to more than its usual paleness, and letting, the paper drop on her knee,

she covered her face with her hands, and murmured, "So, then it is all over! Well, God's will be done! May every blessing rest upon them all! Wouldn't I be the most ungrateful creature in the world if I didn't rejoice to hear of this — ay! and I will — the devil *shall* not master me, for God is my helper and my deliverer! I *will* rejoice, and I *am* grateful to my God for having heard my prayers for them."

"For who, Alice?" said her father rousing, himself from his slumber. "Have you got any news?"

"Yes, father, plenty of news, too. I have got a letter from my dear, dear Mrs. Finlay."

"Bless my soul, now did you, Alice? And how is she?"

"A great deal better than she was, and what do you think, but Miss Cecilia was married to Captain Reynolds the day before Mrs. Finlay wrote the letter. What do you think of that, father?"

"Why, indeed, I'm overjoyed to hear it, as you tell me the Finlays were all so well pleased with the match."

"But there's another wedding to be very soon, father," said Alice in a lower voice, and with a crimson glow on her cheek. "Mr. Archibald is to be married some time about Christmas."

"Ah, then, who to, Alice?"

"To a Scotch lady that they met in Edinburgh, but her father lives in Dundee, and it's there the marriage is to take place." Somehow there was not another word spoken for several minutes, and it was Cormac who broke the silence.

"Alice!" said he, in a low, subdued voice, "Alice! is that all?"

"No, father, it is not!" replied his daughter,

in a quick, hurried tone, "Father, I promised to tell you one day or another the only secret that I ever kept from you."

There was another short silence. Cormac moved his chair a little nearer to his daughter, then leaned over, as if anxious to catch every syllable of what was coming.

"You'll understand all," resumed Alice, "by what I'm going to tell you. Or perhaps it's better for me to read that part of the letter for you. 'My dear Alice: If Mr. Finlay and myself are to-day the happiest of parents, we owe it under God to you and to you alone. It was only yesterday that Archibald confessed to us how he had so long tried to get you to marry him privately, and how it was your prudence and fidelity to us that set him upon overcoming his affection for you, in obedience to the voice of duty. He told us how you always represented to him the vast difference that there was between you, and that such a marriage would be sure to displease his parents, and degrade him more or less in the eyes of the world, and that for yourself your conscience would not permit you to listen to him. How you repelled all his advances, and finally made him understand that he was bound in duty to turn his thoughts away from you. That accounted for his being so desirous to go to Europe, and then we knew the rest, since his meeting with Miss Forbes. Now, Alice, I did not wonder at Archy's love for you, knowing you as I do, and seeing you grow up together side by side; but Mr. Finlay did not feel this as I did, and he was at first very much displeased. When he came to reconsider the matter, he found that we were all very much indebted to you, so he begs that you will accept the enclosed as a memento of our gratitude. You can put it

in the Savings Bank as a little reserve. I hope your father is in good health, and also your friend, Mrs. Dempsey.' And then there was a small postscript in the corner. 'You will be rejoiced to hear that I have at length got admission into the Church, and have made the acquaintance of some of the most distinguished of the Irish prelates. I am now an avowed Catholic, yet, strange to say, Mr. Finlay seems perfectly satisfied.' "

"Now, father," said Alice, as she folded up the letter, "isn't that good news?"

"My poor Alice!" was her father's only answer, and he laid his hand caressingly on her head.

"Father, it will never do to speak to me that way, as if I was very much to be pitied. I'll just tell you how the matter stands. I used to like Mr. Archy very much, for he was always more like a brother to me than anything else, and it was just as much as I could do to keep him at a distance — as I did — but I knew it was my duty, and I prayed to God to assist me, and I approached the sacraments often to obtain that grace and strength of which I stood in need, and now, thanks be to God, I have got over all those weak, foolish notions, and can rejoice in the prospect of his happy marriage."

"Well! the Lord bless you, child, for the time to come, for surely He has blessed you in the past. You didn't look at what was in the letter — did you?"

"Oh! I declare, I forgot all about it," said Alice, laughing, as she stooped to pick up the scrap of paper. "Why, father, it's a *hundred-dollar bill* — did ever you hear anything like that?"

"A hundred dollars!" cried Cormac, raising his hands in astonishment, "and is all that money our own? Why, we'll be as rich as a couple of

Jews. God bless them all!" he immediately added, "and reward them for all their goodness to us!"

"Amen! amen! said Alice, raising her eyes to heaven, with pious fervor, and remaining a moment in silent prayer.

In the course of the evening Alice and her father went down to communicate their good news to Uncle Harry, and Alice did her aunt's heart good by telling her the secret of her interview with Captain Reynolds. It is quite certain that she never revealed to mortal ear (except her father's) the other secret which more closely concerned herself; but as Mrs. Malone never suspected anything of it, her curiosity was, of course, not excited. Harry willingly undertook to place the money in the bank, and our little party was as happy that evening as happy could be.

"Well, now, the short and long of it is," said Lizzie, "that you're born for good luck, Alice Riordan! and that's the reason everything turns out so well with you."

"You're out there, Lizzie," exclaimed her husband, "it's because Alice always does what's right, and obeys the laws of God and of His Church; so that there's a blessing on everything she has a hand in. See how she was the means of saving that daughter of Mrs. Dempsey's, and how well she managed that affair of Captain Reynolds, though it looked so bad at first. I tell you what it is, Lizzie, there's nothing like religion after all, my little woman, and I think the sooner you and I begin to look after it, we'll be all the better off, both for this world and the next. That's my notion!"

"True for you, Harry," said Cormac Riordan, "if *my* daughter, Alice, wasn't so good and so

pious, we'd be far short of what we are now. When you look round about you in the world, I'm sure you'll say that *that's* true, for you'll see many and many a girl going headlong to destruction, because they forget God, and they go on in their own foolish ways — a curse to themselves and all belonging to them. You're right enough, Harry, it's only religion that can make people really happy, even in this world!"





CHAPTER XIV.

Every white will have its black,
And every sweet its sour. — SIR CAULINE, 1609.

What power like that which turns to bliss
The mournful and the dull,
And from the dust beneath our feet
Calls up the beautiful? — ELLIOTT

WEEDS and months rolled away, and though the world around was constantly changing and shifting, according to its custom, yet Alice Riordan and her father were still the same. Time passed lightly over their heads, and, in quiet enjoyment of present happiness, they looked forward to the future without apprehension. Alice had no lack of work, thanks to her neatness and punctuality, and yet she found time enough to take her father to church every morning to six o'clock Mass, and very often in the twilight, too, for a walk. Cormac was always decently and comfortably clad, and on Sundays he could "turn out 'as respectably as any tradesman in the city. And as Alice helped him to make his simple toilet, and tied the good black-silk cravat neatly around his neck over the snow-white shirt which her own hands had "done up," her heart swelled with joy and gratitude, and with an honest pride that in her was very excusable. And Cormac was, or at least ought to be, as happy as man could be; no

tender infant was ever more lovingly cared for; his wants were not only supplied, but anticipated, and as he said himself, "he couldn't complain of the want of his sight so long as he was near Alice, for one would think she never did anything else but watch him." Yet, with all this, there were times when Alice could detect a cloud gathering on her father's brow, and he would sometimes fall into a revery that was sure to end with a low sigh. Then, as if fearful that his daughter might suspect any latent regret on his part or any secret discontent, he would smile and make some pleasant remark, and go in search of his pipe — his unfailing source of consolation — when any little retrospective sadness weighed upon his mind. But of late Alice began to notice that even the pipe had lost somewhat of its wonted efficacy, and she began to fear that her father's temporary fits of dejection were not altogether connected with bygone days, — that the shadow was not *all* from the past.

For some time Alice affected not to notice this, hoping that, whatever the cause might be, it would soon pass away. She therefore redoubled, if it were possible, her efforts to make her father happy; she worked harder and more closely than ever, in order to have time to read for him in the evenings, and at times she fancied she had succeeded in charming away the vampire that was preying on her father's mind. Things went on in this way for some time; Harry Malone and his wife had left off keeping a tavern, and Lizzie's energies of mind and body were exercised in catering "for boarders." The well-known tavern in St. Lawrence street had somewhat changed its character, and was now a private boarding-house, its owners were considerably improved in many respects. Uncle Harry was both a soberer and

a wiser man, and Lizzie, his wife, though still as bustling as ever and somewhat addicted to peeping through keyholes and the like, was no longer wholly absorbed in money making. At times she was quite pious even, and would go the length of admitting that, "after all, religion wasn't such a bad thing — nor so hard to keep up to, neither, as she used to think it." So, on the whole, Alice thought it best to speak to her uncle on the subject of her own secret anxiety; and, going down to his house one day just at the time when she knew her aunt was at market, she asked him if he had noticed any change in her father of late,

"Change, Alice? why, no, then, I can't say I did. What makes you ask?"

"Well, I'll just tell you, Uncle Harry, for that's what brought me here. I have noticed for some time past that there is something a trouble to my father, but, whatever it is, I see plainly he doesn't want to let me know anything of it. But I'm sure he's not happy."

"Tut, tut, Alice, it's all imagination — why, what in the world wide has the man to trouble him? By the laws, if Cormac Riordan's not happy, there's not a man in the city happy — and I tell you what, Alice, if he *wasn't* a happy man, I'd call him a very *ungrateful* man, for I think he has nothing to wish for — that's *my* notion. Come, come, Alice, don't be making a fool of yourself this way. I'm surprised at a girl of your sense to be makin' bug-a-boos."

"But I tell you, uncle, that I *am* not making bug-a-boos to frighten myself — there *is* something on my father's mind, and I want you to advise me what to do. Whatever the cause may be, it is quite clear that he wants to keep it from *me*, but perhaps he mightn't be so close with you, if you'd try and come round him softly."

"Well, anything at all to oblige you, Alice," replied her uncle. "I know you're not apt to be imaginin' things, so I'll see what I can do. Bad cess to him, for a foolish man, what can he have to trouble him?" he added, sharply. "I declare I'm vexed at him, so I am."

"Oh! don't be vexed, Uncle Harry, don't be vexed," said Alice soothingly. "You know my poor father has his own infirmity, and his cross is a heavy one — neither you nor I know whether we could bear it as well as he does. But I must hurry home, now, for he'll be wondering what keeps me. Mind, you come soon, now, and I'd just be as well pleased if you said nothing about this matter to my aunt — at least, till we see a little farther."

"Why, blood alive! Alice, do you think I'm a fool? no, nor the sorrow of a word of it Lizzie 'll hear, for if she did we might as well put it on the market-cross. Oh, bedad, I know my little woman too well for *that*,"

On the following Sunday Alice proposed to her father to walk down after vespers to Uncle Harry's, and, after some hesitation, Cormac consented. Harry and Lizzie were very glad to see them, and would have them stay for tea, "for," said Lizzie, "I've just got in some fine souchong that will do your very heart good, for I know you're both fond of black tea — Irish-like. Take off your bonnet, Alice, and stay here with your father and Harry — I'll be back in five minutes."

"Can't Alice just as well go down to the kitchen with you, Lizzie?" said her husband — you can have your chat together while the tea is drawing." And he winked at Alice. "Cormac and I are no strangers, I'm sure, so you needn't stand on ceremony."

"Come along, then, Alice," said her aunt, "we'll leave them to keep each other in company. You and I'll find something to do—ay! and say, too, in the kitchen." So off she marched, taking Alice with her—the latter well pleased to give her uncle the desired opportunity of sounding her father.

They had no sooner reached the kitchen than Lizzie despatched Betty, her aid-de-camp, on some errand up stairs, and then proceeded to tell Alice that she had news for her.

"Well, I hope it's good news, aunty," observed Alice, with a smile.

"And so it is, Alice, the best of news—but just take this loaf and be cutting it till I come back—I want to get some preserves out of the closet in the dining-room. I tell you what, Alice, you're a lucky girl—I'll tell you all about it in a minute."

Fortunately for Alice she was not of a very impatient turn, nor much given to curiosity, for, though her aunt was to have been but a minute absent, it was fully a quarter of an hour before she returned. Alice had cut and buttered two plates of bread, and was sitting quietly at a window, looking out into the yard, where Betty was milking a fine cow of the real Ayrshire breed, when in came Lizzie, her face brimful of importance.

"Well," said she, "but this is the queer world, anyhow; not the world, either, but the people that are in it. Some people's never content, do what you will with them."

"Why, what's the matter, aunty?"

"What's the matter, Alice—why, indeed, there's enough the matter. I'm sure if I was you, I wouldn't be toiling and slaving for any one that

would be so ungrateful. You have a fair chance now of doing for yourself, and if you don't do it, you're not the sensible girl I took you for."

Alice changed color, and she felt her heart throbbing audibly against her bosom. "I don't understand you, aunty — what in the world do you mean?"

"Why, what *could* I mean, only that your father's an old goose — that's what he is, and as full of ingratitude as an egg is full of meat. There he is — crying like a child, and telling Harry how he wants to go home and lay his bones in Kil-Kil-Kil-something, where his people are all buried — it seems he has a notion that he won't live a great while, and nothing will serve him but Kil-bother, or whatever it is. If I were you, I'd just pay his passage and let him go home to Dinny again. And now I'll tell you the secret, before we go to tea."

By this time Alice was as pale as ashes; the tears were choking her, but she made a violent effort to keep them in, well knowing that her aunt would only laugh at her. For a moment she could not articulate a word, but, controlling her feelings as well as she could, she strove to ask her aunt, forcing a smile at the same time, whether any one had told her this.

"Tell me!" said Lizzie, with a toss of her head, "no, indeed, there's not much danger of their telling *me* any secret — but still, somehow, I happen to get wind of everything that's on foot — they can't keep *me* in the dark — that's one comfort."

With all her agitation of mind, Alice could not forbear smiling at her aunt's self-gratulation; she could not help thinking of the day when poor Lizzie made her unintentional prostration before

Father Smith. But her heart was too full of sadness to indulge even for a moment in mirth; so she merely observed that it was very natural for her father to think very often of home, and that she saw no ingratitude in his wishing to lie where his fathers lay for many generations back.

"All nonsense, Alice, all nonsense, begging your pardon—hadn't we better go in to tea, though. But, sure enough, that puts me in mind of it—you must try and look as well as you can, for that young Mr. Richardson that was with us the other evening at your house has a great notion of you."

"Of me, aunty?" and Alice blushed to her very temples. "You are only jesting, I know, and, I wish you hadn't minded it just now, for, jest and all as it is, it will make me ashamed to look at him, and it seems so silly for me to blush and look shamefaced for no reason at all."

"Oh, never mind, Alice!" said her matter-of-fact little aunt, "it'll be all straight by and by, for I have made up my mind that it *must* be a match between you. There's no need to be ashamed—it's proud and happy you ought to be, for I tell you it's not every one Mr. Richardson would take to as he does to you."

"Well, well, aunty, I scarce know what to say to you, but, at any rate, let us go in—they'll all be waiting for their tea."

It happened that evening that several of the boarders were absent—some on parties of pleasure—some gone to the country for the day; so that there was only young Richardson aforesaid, and two elderly men of respectable appearance. Richardson was a good-looking young man of some six or eight and twenty, with a frank, open countenance, somewhat bronzed from exposure to

the weather, and a well-formed, manly figure. He was, on the whole, a young man of whose attentions any girl in his own station might well be proud and this Alice Riordan knew very well, hence the blushing and embarrassment attending on her aunt's communication.

Harry and Cormac were still sitting together in a small room adjoining the dining room, and Lizzie told Alice to go in for them, which Alice was very glad to do for more reasons than one. As she entered the room, her uncle shook his head with a warning gesture, and then, slapping Cormac on the shoulder, he arose: "Come along, Cormac, my man! here's Alice come to tell us that tea is ready."

"Well, I'm ready to go, Harry. Where are you, Alice dear?"

"Here, father," said Alice, taking his hand, and speaking in as cheerful a tone as she could command. "Aunty and I were long about getting the tea, but you must both of you forgive us this time—you know Uncle Harry told us to have a chat together," she added archly.

"And I'll go bail you took me at my word," said her uncle. "Get along there, you young witch; I suppose you were making a charm on my little Lizzie—was she with you *all* the time?" he added with a look of sly humor.

"Well! not exactly *all* the time, uncle; she came up stairs for something she wanted."

"To be sure she did—I saw her eye shining through the keyhole there—I declare to my sins I don't know what to do with her—I wish she was as deaf as a stone."

"Fie, fie, uncle!" said Alice, reprovingly, "what great harm was it for her to hear what passed between you and my father—I suppose you weren't plotting treason—were you?"

"May be *ay*, and may be *no*!" replied her uncle, with one of his merry laughs; "but see, there's Mr. Richardson placing a chair for you, and Lizzie has on her vinegar face, so I see it's the best of our play to sit down at once and 'fall to,' as they say in the old country."

The evening passed away very pleasantly; Richardson took every opportunity of making court to Alice, and Alice received his attentions so graciously that Lizzie was delighted. Every now and then she would nudge Harry with her elbow or call his attention to what was going on with one of her knowing winks. Even the two elderly gentlemen were made acquainted with her plans and wishes. "Now, Mr. Rogers! don't you think they'd make a very handsome couple? —I declare, I think they were made for one another. What do *you* say, Mr. Green?"

Mr. Rogers thought it highly probable, and Mr. Green sagely observed that "more unlikely things had come to pass."

Cormac was the only one who knew nothing of the matter: he seemed unusually depressed; and though he entered into conversation with Richardson, and even argued religion for some time with Green, yet Alice and Harry were both painfully sensible that he was forcing a cheerfulness which he did not feel. About nine o'clock Alice approached him and asked if he did not think it time to go home. "Well, yes, Alice, I think we had as well be moving. We have a long walk before us."

Richardson proposed to see them home, and after some polite objections from both father and daughter his offer was accepted, and they all three set out together. Harry and Lizzie went with them to the door; the former to tell Alice

in a significant tone, that he would be over next day to see them, as he had some business in Craig street, not far from where they lived, and Lizzie to charge Richardson to take good care of Alice on the way, for "good people are scarce, you know, Mr. Richardson."

"Oh! never fear, Mrs. Malone, never fear—we'll get along well, I promise you." So off they went, Alice leaning on her father's arm, and Richardson walking by her side. On the way, he gradually turned the conversation to his own affairs; it appeared he was the son of a widowed mother who was "at home in Ireland," as he said, with two young daughters who were yet but mere children. "My poor mother," said he, "was left a widow when my sisters were only infants, and since then she has had some hard times, though in my father's lifetime she was very well off. She strained every nerve to give me a good education, and it is now four or five years since I came to America with the intention of bringing out my mother and sisters as soon as I had a good way of doing. Every year since I came I sent home some money—last year I sent thirty pounds."

"Thirty pounds! Mr. Richardson," said Cormac; "why, you must have good wages."

"Yes, I have now eight dollars a week."

"Well, and do you still think of sending for your mother?"

"That depends on circumstances," replied Richardson, with some hesitation. "In her last letter, my mother told me she had got into business, and was beginning to do very well—I think she would just as soon stay where she is, and have me send her money as I have been doing. She would like me to go home—but—but I don't think I shall go—at least for some time."

"How did you come by your un-Catholic name, Mr. Richardson?" said Alice; "was your family always Catholic?"

"No," replied Richardson, "my father was a Protestant and an Englishman, but as he died when we were all quite young, my dear mother was enabled to bring us up in the true faith. I owe everything to my mother," he added in a tone of deep feeling.

"God bless you, Mr. Richardson," said Cormac, fervently; "it does my heart good to hear you speak that way of your mother. There's no fear but you'll have a blessing. Are we near home, Alice?"

"Very near, father," said Alice, in a low voice; "We have only a block or two farther to go. Mr. Richardson, it is getting late; had you not better turn back?"

"Not till I see you safe at home; that is, provided you have no objection. If you have, just say so, and I'll be off at once."

"Oh! not at all," said Alice, quickly; "I'm sure we're very much obliged to you, and very glad of your company — but then the trouble —"

"I'm very glad to hear that you're glad of my company," he rejoined, taking her up quickly — "as to the trouble, that's *my* affair — suppose the trouble, as you call it, were only a very great pleasure — what then?"

"Why, I suppose we must not deprive you of it — that's all," said Alice, laughingly. "But here we are at the door."

"Well, good night, then," said Richardson; "as my services are no longer needed, I'll be going."

"Won't you come in?" said Cormac. Richardson hesitated; he was evidently waiting for Alice to second the invitation; but she did not, so

he hastily excused himself, saying that if Miss Riordan would permit him he would come some evening during the week and spend an hour or two. The permission was given, and Richardson walked away with a light heart, humming as he went the *refrain* of "The Days when we went Gypsy-ing."

Late as it was when they got home, Cormac lit his pipe and sat down to "take a draw" before he went to bed. "Alice, said he, "will you just get Thomas à Kempis and read me a chapter — you always happen on something in it that seems if it was every word written on purpose for me. There's a deal of consolation in that book, my daughter."

"So there is, father, for those who need it — I'm thankful that neither you nor I stand much in need of consolation. God is *so* good to both of us that we don't want either Thomas à Kempis or any other writer to comfort us — at least, I can say that much for myself." She watched her father narrowly as she said this, and she saw that he was making an effort to imitate the cheerfulness of her tone.

"And I too, Alice dear, I'm sure between God and the blessed Virgin and my dear daughter they leave nothing undone to make me happy; an' I *am* happy. Oh, indeed, an' indeed, I *am* happy — God knows I am — an' why wouldn't I? I have everything that my heart could wish."

"I'm delighted to hear you say so, father dear," said Alice, still keeping her eye on him, "for, do you know, I have sometimes feared that you were *not* happy — after all."

The blood mounted to Cormac's face as he replied quickly, "Why, then, you were wrong, Alice, all wrong — I'm as happy as the day's long,

and full of gratitude to God and *you* — but then I can't help thinkin' now and then that I must be goin' some of these days, and —— ”

“Going, father — going where?” said Alice, affecting not to catch his meaning.

“Why, to the kingdom come, my daughter — in the course of nature, my time can't be long now — I must follow them that are gone before me; an' if I could only hope to take my place among them, I'd be well pleased to go when God sees fit to call me. But then it's hard, hard, to think that one must lie down an' moulder into dust where there's not one belongin' to us — among the black strangers.”

By this time the tears were running down poor Cormac's cheeks, and, to say the truth, Alice's own eyes were not dry, but yet she rallied her energies to make light of her father's trouble.

“Why, then, what in the world puts such thoughts in your head, father dear? you *never* used to have such thoughts, an' I'm sure you ought to have more sense than to be disturbing your mind about such things. With God's help, it will be many a long year before you'll want a grave anywhere, and, for my part, so as it's consecrated ground, I don't care where I'm buried, It's all one to the poor body, and I'd just as soon lie in the French burying-ground there above as in Kilshanaghan. I'm surprised at you, father, dear.”

“Well, I can't help it, Alice — I know myself it's foolish; but, as I was just sayin' to Harry this evenin', I can't get it out of my head, do what I will. But don't be cast down, Alice dear; I didn't mean to tell you anything about these childish notions — I suppose it's beginnin' to dote I am,” he added with a forced smile.

"At any rate, father," said Alice, as she took out her handkerchief and wiped her eyes, "it's just as well for me to know all about it — you know very well that your trouble is *my* trouble; and even if these fancies of yours *are* somewhat childish, we must do our best to get you over them. Let us say one Rosary to-night with that intention; and as we'll both be going to communion on Sunday next, let us offer it up for the same purpose. You'll see it will be all right very soon, and that you'll get rid of these notions."

"God grant it, Alice, God grant it — I'd be glad and thankful if I did. "But," he added, with a sudden change of manner, "isn't that Mr. Richardson a fine young man? I believe he's a Catholic, isn't he?"

"Oh dear, yes! father," said Alice quickly. "I used to see him regularly in St. Patrick's Church before ever he went to my aunt's — long before I knew who he was, Oh, indeed, he is a Catholic, and a good one, too."

Cormac smiled, and took a draw or two of the pipe without saying anything, and Alice, not noticing the smile, supposed the matter was ended. But not so; after a little while Cormac resumed the subject. "I'm well pleased," said he, "with his kind remembrance of his mother — a good son is sure to make a good husband."

Alice laughed as she replied, "Very likely, father; but let us leave that to whoever it may concern — he said he'd come some evening this week to sit and chat awhile. I'm glad on your account, father, for he has seen a good deal of the world, and read a good deal, too."

"And I'm glad on *your* account, my daughter," said Cormac, quietly.

"On *my* account, father?" cried Alice, with a start and a blush.

"Just so, Alice, just so. But I think it's late in the night — let us get our prayers over and go to bed."

On Tuesday evening Richardson made his appearance; and though Alice was at first somewhat embarrassed, remembering her aunt's avowed scheme and her father's broad hint, yet after some time the young man's easy, natural manner reassured her, and she gradually recovered her usual composure. The evening passed pleasantly away; and when Richardson rose to take his leave, the regret was common to all parties. Cormac expressed a hope that he would come very soon again; and if Alice did not say as much, there was a tell-tale blush on her face that did say as much — and more, too; quite enough, in short, to send him away in the best of spirits. The next time he came, Uncle Harry was with him, brimful of Cormac's secret; but Alice soon gave him to understand that it was no "secret now." Harry sat down, took out his handkerchief and rubbed his face over and over again: "And so I've had my walk for nothing," he said in a low voice to Alice; "but," lowering his voice to a whisper, he added, "may be not *all* for nothing. Can't you guess some other business I might have?"

"Well, no, uncle," said Alice, evasively, though she *did* guess, and could not help guessing for her very life.

"I say, Tom Richardson," said Uncle Harry, raising his voice, "Alice wants badly to know what brought us here this evening — isn't she inquisitive, the young wheeler? Am I to tell her, or will you — eh, my lad?"

"Between us we can manage it, I think, Mr. Malone," replied Richardson, with a smile. "I

can't help suspecting that Miss Riordan is not so *very* inquisitive as you would make her appear."

"There, now, Cormac — you see how it is — we must just let these young people come to the point themselves."

"Much obliged, Mr. Malone!" said Richardson, gayly. "We have already got over that first step. My present business is with Mr. Riordan, if he has no objection to speak a few words with me in private."

"And what do you call private?" said Harry. "Do you mean to say that neither Alice nor myself is to hear e'er a word at all? Bad manners to me! but that's a good joke. I've a great mind to just put in *my* word before *yours* — eh, Alice?"

His knowing wink was lost on Alice, who, with a blushing face and a tearful eye, was watching the effect of Richardson's almost whispered words on her father, where the two stood together at the window in low but earnest conversation. Harry's glance involuntarily followed that of his niece, and he saw at once that Cormac was well pleased. Every feature of his honest, intelligent countenance was expressive of heartfelt satisfaction, and there was no mistaking the friendly, confidential manner in which he laid his hand on Richardson's shoulder and said, "I believe every word of it; God bless you, Mr. Richardson, God bless you — you have taken a heavy load off my heart this day. You have my free consent and my blessing, from my heart out."

"Alice!" said her father, holding out his hand for her to come to him, "Alice, my child, I needn't ask what *you* have to say in this matter."

"Indeed you needn't, Cormac," cried Lizzie Malone, pushing open the door, "for that's as plain as the nose on my face."

The young people laughed outright, and even Cormac went as near laughing as he was ever known to do; but Harry shook his fist at his incorrigible little wife, and looked at her as fiercely as though he meant to inflict manual correction forthwith; but no such thing — Lizzie's harmless eavesdropping had become of such frequent occurrence that he began to take it as a matter of course; and when she did not expose herself before strangers, he could laugh at it as well as another, though he generally made a show of being angry,

"And is it here you are, you little chattering magpie," said he, "when I thought you were picking feathers in the attic at home? I believe in my heart you're as much a fairy as anything else."

"Fairy here or fairy there," said Lizzie, with her usual toss of the head, "I knew very well what you were coming here for; so, as you said nothing to me about it, I thought I'd be even with you. And, upon my credit, it's not what I deserve to be kept in the dark this way, for it was myself set the whole thing a-going, and both Tom and Alice can tell you that."

"Not a doubt of it, Mrs. Malone," said Richardson, willing to soothe the ruffled dignity of the pouting little woman. "I will not certify that you were the first to *think* of it, but I am ready to bear witness that you were the first to *speak* of it."

"Now, Harry, you hear that, don't you?" said Lizzie, exultingly.

"I'm not deaf!" was the laconic answer, as her husband reached over for Cormac's pipe where it lay on the stove-pan.

"Well! and when is it to be?" said Lizzie, eagerly addressing Alice.

"I — really — don't know — aunt!" replied Alice, hesitatingly. "We have — we have —"

"We have arranged nothing as yet, Mrs. Malone," said Tom, coming to the rescue; "but it will be very *soon*, I hope."

"You know you have to write home to your parish priest, Tom," observed Harry, "and also to your mother — unless there's a favorable answer from both, there's no marriage here for you. Father McDonnell is very strict, you know."

"I know that very well," said Richardson; "and, in any case, I would not think of marrying without asking my mother's consent, which, as the matter stands, I am sure of having: for she is so wholly devoted to her children, and to me in particular, as her only son, that whatever is likely to promote *my* happiness will be sure to please *her*!"

About a month after this conversation, Harry and Lizzie Malone went as usual to St. Patrick's Church on Sunday to Grand Mass, — (Cormac, Alice, and Richardson, too, had all gone to an early Mass that day to the French church,) — and when the priest commenced publishing the banns, they were well pleased to hear, amongst the rest, the names of Thomas Richardson and Alice Riordan, daughter of Cormac Riordan, etc., "first and last call."

"There, now!" said Lizzie, as they walked home together, "I made up my mind long ago that *this* was to be; and now, you see, it's a coming to pass. Isn't it a lucky chance for Alice?"

"That's all to be tried yet," retorted her husband — "I think it's just as lucky a chance for Richardson — he'd travel far before he'd meet another Alice Riordan."

"And don't I know that myself as well as you. Who all's to be at the wedding, I wonder?"

"None but ourselves and the Dempseys — Ellen's to be bridesmaid, you know; I believe Smith and O'Reilly are asked — the latter for groomsgman."

On the following morning three carriages, or open four-wheeled cabs, drove up to Cormac Riordan's door a little before seven o'clock. Out of one stepped Richardson, with his friends O'Reilly and Smith. On entering the house they found Alice and her father, Uncle Harry and Lizzie, with Ellen Dempsey and her mother, all in readiness. Alice was attired in a plain white muslin dress, with a neat white-silk bonnet, and a lace veil of the same color. The dress well became the delicacy of her fair features, and the slight, graceful proportions of her figure were but partially concealed by a blue crape shawl. Ellen Dempsey looked very neat and very pretty; and Mrs. Malone sported a handsome silk dress of a rich copper color, bought expressly for the occasion. Every one complimented Alice on her good looks; but her father was near spoiling all, when, as she took his hand to lead him down stairs, (making Richardson a sign not to interfere,) he said, in a voice of deep feeling, —

"I wish I could see you, Alice dear! if it was only one glance — my heart tells me that you look just as your mother did four and twenty years ago, when we set off for the priest's house one fine May morning. Now, does she not, Harry?"

"So like," replied Harry, "that myself was startled a while ago, when she came out from the room. But what about Kilshanaghan *now*, Cormac?"

"Don't say a word about it, one of you!" cried Lizzie from behind; "it's no fit subject for a time like this."

"True for you, Mrs. Malone," said Cormac; "but this good man of yours likes to be taking a rise out of me now and then. Indeed, he's heartily welcome to his joke."

Alice led her father to the carriage door with even more than her wonted tenderness, and even assisted Richardson to place him on the seat, so fearful was she of his missing a foot on the step. She, her father, Uncle Harry, and Ellen went in the first carriage, and others placed themselves indiscriminately. Going to the church, the bridegroom and bride never go together in this part of the world. The bridal party proceeded to the parish church of Notre Dame, and heard mass in the Chapel of the Infant Jesus, where all marriages are performed. Several other couples were "made one" at the same mass, all of them Irish, for Father McDonnell was specially appointed to marry the Irish. The ceremony over, the good priest gave a fervent blessing to the new-married pair. Richardson took Alice by the hand and led her to the carriage: even at that moment Alice turned to see where her father was, and charged her uncle to hold him by the hand.

"Never fear, Alice, never fear; I'll take as good care of him as you would yourself. Leave him to me for this one day."

In the afternoon the whole party took "a drive" round the mountain — the favorite ride of the citizens of Montreal, who have no small pride in exhibiting the beauties of "the mountain" to visitors from abroad. Alice Riordan's wedding day was as bright and beautiful a day as ever cheered the earth; the world was all sunshine and the air all balm. And just as bright were the prospects of the young couple on that day united for life; they had before them, in all human probability, a long

course of uninterrupted happiness; but a cloud soon fell on the gay scene, that made it dark and mournful to one of them at least.

Cormac Riordan had been most anxious to hurry on the wedding, and every one thought that he was only actuated by his desire to secure his daughter's happiness; but the true motive was soon made manifest. He had for some time been troubled with a dry, hectic cough, not so severe as to excite the fears of others, but quite bad enough to convince himself that his days were already numbered; hence his gloomy apprehensions of being buried amongst strangers, and hence, too, his extreme anxiety to see Alice happily married. Richardson hired a pretty little cottage on the Vapineau Road, and Cormac was installed in the best of the two bed rooms it contained. Alice gave up her dressmaking for the present, and devoted herself wholly to her father, now that he began to complain occasionally, a thing Alice had never known him to do before, and she was all the more alarmed on that account. At times he would rally for a few days, and announce his hopes that he was "over the worst of it;" but even Alice at length perceived with an aching heart that her beloved father was "going fast." The discovery was a severe shock to her — she made Richardson go at once for a doctor without asking her father's leave, for he had hitherto scouted the idea of having a doctor. When the doctor came, he told Alice in private that her father was already far gone in a rapid consumption, and that "all the doctors in Canada could not save him. He might last a week or two, but no more." It was as much as Alice could do to keep in the tears till the doctor was gone; she felt as though a sword had pierced her heart, and

her brain was burning with a feverish heat. Fortunately, her anguish found vent in tears, or it would have been insupportable, and she appeared before her father with affected cheerfulness.

About ten days after, the friends of Cormac Riordan were summoned to his side; Harry and Lizzie came "post haste" in a cab, and found him already all but speechless. Yet he was perfectly sensible. He had received the last sacraments two days before, and was now calmly awaiting the final moment in the fulness of faith, hope, and charity. His hands were clasped over the crucifix on his bosom, and his lips were moving in inward prayer.

"Thank God, we're not too late!" said Harry, fervently, "He's not gone yet."

"No!" said Cormac, speaking in a husky voice, and with long intervals between his words. "I'm waiting on God's good pleasure. I'm glad you're in time. I wanted to bid you farewell. Is Mrs. Malone with you?"

"Yes, Cormac, dear! I'm here; have you anything to say to me?"

"Just only one word — I wanted to thank you for all your goodness to a poor dark man, that was a burden to every one about him, and to beg of you, for the love of God, both you and Harry, to think *more* of the next world and less of this. You must all come to this sooner or later, and don't forget to make hay while the sun shines."

Both Harry and his wife readily promised that, with God's help, they would never again be so negligent of the affairs of their souls, and their voices were choked with sobs. "Thank God!" murmured Cormac; "we'll meet again in heaven, I humbly trust. Till then, God be with you. Pray for me when I'm gone."

"Cormac, dear," said Harry, bending down over him, "are you still troubled about dying so far from home?"

"Oh no, Harry! Oh no! not in the least — that was only a temptation — I've got over it long ago. Alice and myself made a Novena to the Blessed Virgin, and since that I never had any more trouble. What matter where the poor body returns to dust, so as it's consecrated ground? Tom Richardson, I charge you take good care of Alice, — she was the best of daughters, and I'm sure she'll make one of the best of wives. Alice, my child — where are you? give me your hand." She did so — she could not speak — she could only kiss her father's pale lips, and squeeze his cold, clammy hand. It was enough; a smile came over the pale, shrunken face — the words "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph," were heard to issue from the quivering lip — then it was suddenly stilled, and all was over. Cormac Riordan was gone to that eternal home for which he had long sighed.









